

UNESCO collaborate with FNU to conduct first-ever Ethics Teachers' Training course in Fiji



FNU -UNESCO Ethics Teacher's Training Course participants with facilitators

To effectively deal with ethical concerns in the changing world, twenty-five educators from Fiji National University (FNU) are attending an Ethics Teachers' training course (ETTC) to enhance their teaching and professional capacities in Bioethics, Ethics and Human Rights.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in collaboration with FNU to improve the quality of ethics education, organised a week-long course at Namaka Campus, Nadi.

According to FNU Pro Vice-Chancellor - Learning and Teaching (PVC-L&T), Professor James Pounder with moral values been challenged by society in this day and age, FNU graduates need to understand the gravity and importance of ethics and moral values and apply this in their profession as well as advocate this in society.



FNU's, Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), Professor James Pounder.

"As educators, we see ourselves not only teaching technical things but teaching value system which will enable students to be productive members of the society," said Professor Pounder.

The inaugural workshop is being attended by FNU staff from various disciplines. The facilitators of the workshop are qualified professionals well versed in ethical and moral teaching across a variety of cultures.

"We can benefit from principles that they are displaying at the workshop which help us to comprehend the best practice in the world in teaching ethics," he said.

FNU's Professor in Education, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, who is one of the presenters of the workshop, said that ethics is essential to educators and researchers.

"Ethics training anchors us morally via agreed principles and values of good conduct, and such training enhances the quality of ethics education by developing professional capacities of ethics in teachers in Fiji and across Pacific," she said.

Course coordinator and UNESCO, Programme Specialist for Social and Human Sciences, Irakli Khodeli said the course is designed to

build the capacity of teachers by introducing the innovative, modern, tested scholastic method of teaching ethics.

"Teaching ethics is about opening the minds of the students to the complexities of ethical issues that they will encounter in their professionals, whether medical, research or the law," said Khodeli.

"Today science and technology are progressing at a fast rate, and it is hard to keep up with ethical considerations, and it is imperative to have a well-prepared workforce; thus teaching ethics is very important."

Even though there is the universal framework on ethics such as the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights and Declaration of Ethical Principles in relation to Climate Change (2017), Khodeli stressed that these principles need to be contextualised into local settings.

"The participants will help UNESCO to understand the local context of ethics teaching and how these universal principles can be applied in a local context," he said.

Participant Dr Satyanand Singh, FNU's Assistant Professor in Electrical-Electronics, was delighted to be part of the course which covered the ethics of engineering.

"The course has met my expectations as currently, engineering is focused in different directions and dimensions, and in engineering, we need to follow the ethics," he said.

The week-long course is spearheaded by FNU Head of Campus, Labasa, Pardeep Lal through the office of PVC L&T.



UNESCO Programme Specialist for Social and Human Sciences, Irakli Khodeli

In 2017 Lal attended a similar course at the University of Otago, New Zealand.

"The course will immensely benefit Fiji participants in their teaching. I found the training very beneficial and still use the casebooks in my teaching," said Lal.

The course is facilitated by Dr Bert Gordijn, Professor and Director of the Institute of Ethics at Dublin City University in Ireland, Dr Mohammad Abdul Aziz, Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Law, University of Malaya, Dr Simon Walker, Lecturer at the Bioethics Centre of the University of Otago and supported by FNU academics, Professor James Pounder and Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba.

The course concludes with the teaching demonstrations by participants concludes today.