

TALANOA TOKTOK

Official Publication of the Pacific Conference of Churches



Let youths lead

Follow my lead ... Uto Ni Yalo crew member shows young people how to steer

Time for real involvement in leadership

YOUNG people have urged churches to take greater notice of issues which affect their youth and include these as part of organisational social justice activities. In the last 24 months of community engagement across the region, the PCC has heard that older, mostly male members of congregations tend to dominate programme creation in churches. This means that current issues - unemployment, climate change, gender-based violence - are often not addressed in the pulpit or by the church.

Recent studies show this to be the case in some churches in Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa.

The Pacific Conference of churches has invited young people from around the region to submit their concerns on issues which affect them and how churches can become involved in addressing their concerns. To make submissions, visit www.pcc.org.fj or the PCC Facebook page for details.

Easier access to our website



WE'RE making access to our website easier with the development of a QR code so that users can scan their way into our on-line communications. As we develop further, there will be links to material which churches and educators can use in the areas of climate change, gender and child protection, climate change and general information about our member churches. We're also working on bringing on-line, hundreds of papers and books on regional history and ecumenism for use by students and researchers. We welcome your comments.

Partners in learning

Young academics engage rural communities



Rainy days ... Kelera Ravula, a Pacific Theological College research student at work in Tukuraki, Ba, Fiji

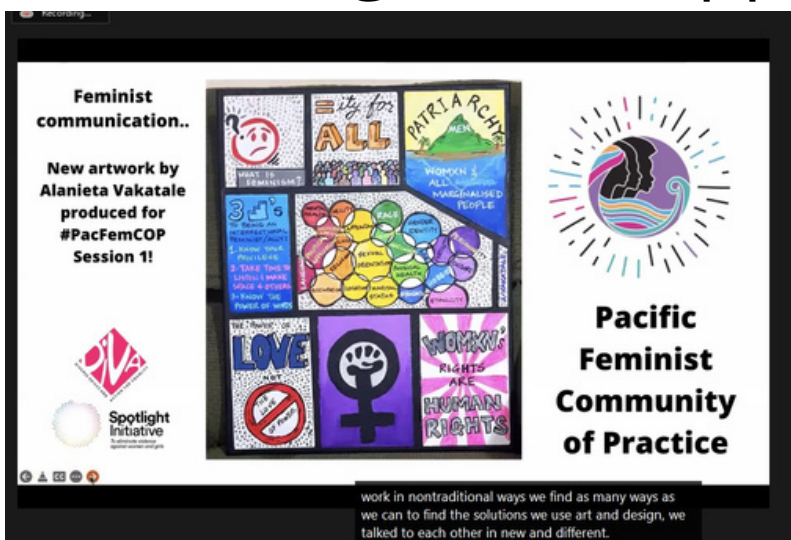
TUKURAKI Village perches on a ridge in the remote highlands of Ba Province in rural Fiji. This is the new Tukuraki. In 2012 a landslide destroyed 80 per cent of the old village and killed three people, forcing villagers to relocate.

In this community, Kelera Ravula works to find out about the daily challenges of village life. Development models, governance issues, the involvement of young people, children and women in community activities and leadership are some of the areas on which she will focus. Kelera is part of a group of 24 young people in 15 villages who are students of the Pacific Theological College through its Institute of Mission and Research.

For 18 months - ending in late 2023 - the young academics will work in communities in between classes at the PTC's Veiuto Campus. The Pacific Conference of Churches provides financial and human resources support to the project which will be rolled out throughout the region once a curriculum has been established.



Women agree to support each other



REGIONAL women theologians have agreed to support their counterparts in the Pacific. Feminists and women theologians gathered in person and on-line for the second time this year to discuss practical and theological issues which affect their work.

SPC, PIFS, UN Women, the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, DIVA for Equality and Shifting the Power Coalition were represented. On-line meetings have continued to link regional women in the absence of air travel for the second straight year.

Delegates also discussed specific challenges faced by women in their churches and the use of the Bible to promote women's empowerment and participation in theology.



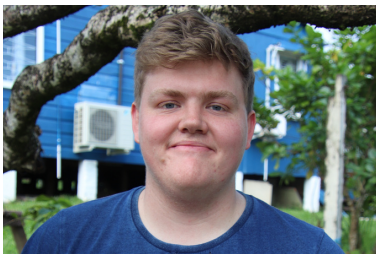
Push out ... delegate at the PCC Training of Trainers for Child Protection programme

The first cohort of Church Enablers in Child Protection and Safeguarding have been commissioned to implement Christian messages through Fellowship Bible Studies in local congregations and parishes.

An intensive training programme saw a group of 20 participants from the Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Salvation Army, Coptic Orthodox, Baptist, and Assemblies of God churches, learn about child protection through Biblical models and Safe Church policies. Representatives from HART and the Council for World Mission also attended. Based on Psalm 127:3, the training ensures protection of children - God's greatest gifts.

This is the latest phase in the Pacific Conference of Churches' mission programme for children in a three country piloted research which began in 2020. Church enablers in the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands will be trained in the coming months to contribute towards updates of a Regional Toolkit regarding children for PCC's member churches. .

PCC's ongoing partnership with UNICEF is designed to ensure churches are safe spaces for children and also encourages churches to create local policies which protect the safety of the most vulnerable in the community which includes women, people living with special needs, and the elderly.



New staff take up appointments

THREE new staff joined the PCC Secretariat headquarters in Suva in April as the organisation expanded appointments into the region. The PCC has a Solomon Islander and Marshallese on staff with moves to introduce non-Fiji employees shortly.

TOBIAS Nissen joins the PCC from France. He is 18 years old and will undertake a two-month internship attached on our Ecological Stewardship Desk. He attended High School in Ecolint - Switzerland and is a member of the Evangelical Baptist Church of Geneva. Tobias is the second intern from the Global North.

BEDI Racule is a graduate of Bingham Young University in Hawa'i with a Bachelor of Science in Hospitality and Tourism. She is studying for doing a Postgraduate Diploma in Development Studies and is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Bedi will be Intern to the Ecumenical Enabler for Climate Justice.

WILFER Rigamoto is the intern to the Ecumenical Enabler for Ecological Stewardship. Originally from the Island of Rotuma, he is a USP Graduate with a Bachelors in Psychology and Sociology. He has also completed a certificate of Theology with the Pacific Theological College and is a member of the Methodist Church of Fiji and Rotuma.



The deep end ... Joint civil society paddlers take their message to the business house competition

Ocean links CSOs

PACIFIC civil society will take the message on protecting the oceans into the business community in an innovative, non-confrontational way beginning in Fiji in April.

Staff of five non-governmental organisations - including the Pacific Conference of Churches - have entered two teams in Suva's business house paddling competition.

Team Deep Sea Minders is a collaboration between the PCC, Fiji Council of Social Services, Pacific Islands Association of NGOs, the Pacific Network on Globalisation and DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era).

The organisations all believe that the ocean is "the living blue heart of our planet. It is our common heritage, but also our common responsibility. We are its guardians. We recognize its significance and its essence as the basis of our Pacific identity and wellbeing. We Are the Ocean. In its preservation, we are preserved."

Under the Pacific Regional Alliance of NGOs, the five organisations have taken the stand that deep sea mining must not be permitted in the region and called for a total ban on DSM to protect the integrity of the ocean.

By taking part in the business house paddling competition, the group hopes to meet people outside the CSO community and pass on the message for the need to protect the ocean through responsible behaviour and through lobbying of local and regional governments.

An integral part of the Pacific Blue Line Initiative is a call on all regional leaders to join the growing ranks of governments, scientific authorities, CSOs, global leaders and indigenous groups the world over opposing the rush to mine the ocean floor.

The Deep Sea Minders teams are made up of young men and women from Fiji, Samoa, and Papua New Guinea.



**Draw a line in the sea
We call for all pacific people to protect the ocean**

We call on governments and leaders to oppose ocean mining

We urge leaders to create a global ban on deep sea mining everywhere