

Our vision is to develop and enhance the quality of leaders in Fiji

I am writing this with the knowledge that whatever I say especially about the future will probably be turned on its head next week.

We LEAD in very strange but exciting times!

We began the year in normal fashion carrying out the selection process for the Leadership Fiji 2020 program. There were concerns on the horizon mainly economic with Fiji slowing considerably. COVID-19 existed but Wuhan seemed a long way away, and for me the major worry was the impact it would have on the global supply chain. We had no idea that within a month the world would be in lock down and we would be desperately reinventing ourselves and our organisations to survive.

The COVID-19 pandemic presents itself as the ultimate ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP challenge, a concept that has long been at the heart of our Leadership Fiji Programs.

We have a problem with a solution that is out of sight. We know as leaders that we need people to change if we are going to solve this problem AND it is clear there are no quick fixes. We need to prepare for many stages and many new problems to spin off this crisis but if we practice the Adaptive Leadership principles we will survive.

Fortunately, our dynamic duo Sharyne and Ioane at our Leadership Fiji Secretariat have been able to put all those Adaptive Leadership learning into practice!

We have shut down our Leadership Fiji Home and are working from our own *homes*. Our first investment was in the Zoom software and Ioane, in consultation with our Leadership Fiji 2020 (LF2020) class, has arranged to relaunch the program online in the last week of April. Thank you to LF2020 for staying so positive and enthusiastic. I was very impressed by this year's group when I spent some time with them at the Opening Retreat in early March, and their response to this crisis reinforces that first impression.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN



William Parkinson

Sharyne hosted a very successful Zoom Webinar to discuss the current crisis with participation of around 40 leaders from not only across Fiji but the Pacific including Australia, New Zealand and China. We intend to run these Webinars on a fortnightly basis as a way of sharing learning and maybe even venting a little!

Like for many organisations over this period of “extreme heat i.e. change” has driven us to accelerate adapting to new technology. With no clear end in sight to the current crisis we intend to launch a range of programs on Zoom including our Adaptive Leadership series. These will launch late April early May.

It is critical that you monitor our social medias and website to stay in touch.

I want to especially thank all our sponsors, supporters and LF2020 for staying positive and focused.

I repeat that it is important we practice those Adaptive Leadership principles, and by the way, if you aren't familiar with them or feel the need for you to brush up on them, sign up for our Webinar!

Remember:

Manage the heat! “Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable”.

Always remember people hate change even when their lives are at stake so don't get disheartened.

Keep your eyes firmly on our ultimate goal.

Step to the balcony to reflect regularly.

Experiment all the time.

Learn from our mistakes.

STAY POSITIVE because this will take a LOOOONNG time!

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Leadership Fiji 2020 Launch

There was no rest for the Leadership Fiji Secretariat, as we sieved through these applications over December.

Those qualifying for the next stage of the process, the interviews, had the selection panel in awe, as they waded through to get the final applicants selected. Believe us, it is never an easy task!

On Thursday 5th March we launched the 2020 Leadership Fiji program and inducted LF2018 Fellows at the FNU Tiri Bar & Restaurant on Queen Elizabeth Drive in Nasese.

MCs for the evening were Miriama Dinamati and Shaun Corrie who were participants of the Leadership Fiji 2019 program and ably controlled the Launch event and introduced the 31 participants for 2020.

It has been a tradition that a couple of participants from the previous year are hosts for the Launch and introduce the new cohort of the flagship Leadership Fiji Program and our Fellows.

The place was abuzz with a room full of Sponsors and a good number of Alumni who represented their organisations or took the time to join the occasion and to meet up with colleagues from their year group.

Our Chief Guest for the occasion was Ivan Fong, Chief Executive Officer of Amalgamated Telecom Holdings and an Alumni of LF2002. Ivan captured everyone's attention with his inspiring address. He shared his experience as a leader, saying "be prepared to fail and learn from it, the right culture is key to the success of organizations and if you have passion in what you do, it takes you far and people will respect you."

LF2018 Year Rep, Yvette Samson also presented on their Fellows Project, the refurbishment of the Dama District School library. LF2018 took on the challenge to refurbish and resource the library of Dama District School in Bua, Vanua Levu as part of their Fellows Project. They were inspired by Laisa Bale LF2003 who introduced the school to LF2018 as part of their North Session tour.

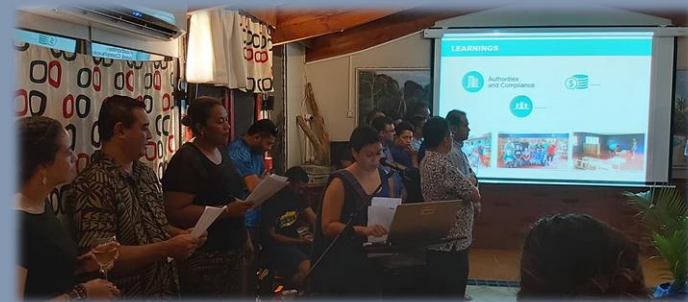
Despite the challenge of commuting to Bua when majority were based on Viti Levu, the team managed to complete their project on plan and handed over the new look library to the School Committee the weekend before the start of the third term in 2019.

A team of 13 from LF2018 with the assistance of the Dama District School Committee and parents carried out the refurbishment work. This involved a couple of first responders from LF2018 arriving a week ahead to prep and strip off paint and windows whilst the rest of the team arrived the week after to help complete the works.

The work included the repainting of the internal and external walls of the library, installation of new library bookshelves, replacement of windows and resourcing the library with books. The library shelves were built in Suva by Trittech Joinery and couriered across to Bua. Edwin Sharma, Managing Director of Trittech Joinery was so inspired by what LF2018 did that he applied and was selected to be in LF2020.

The success of the project was made possible by the teamwork of LF2018, their sponsors, the school management committee, parents and teachers.

We congratulate the 26 LF2018 who were inducted as Fellows and were presented with their Certificates and Fellows Pin. Wear that Pin proudly at all LF events, LF2018. Congratulations!



2020 Opening Retreat

The LF2020 participants got down to business with an early start on Friday morning, 6th March as everyone gathered at the Home of FM96, 231 Waimanu Road to commence their leadership journey by car-pooling down to the Lagoon Resort in Pacific Harbour.

There was a buzz of excitement as participants and our Leadership Fiji executives arrived at the Lagoon Resort and settled into what would be their home for the next two nights and three days for the Opening Retreat.

Day one focused on participants getting to know more about themselves, with self-reflections and their commitments for the future, day two was about teams and day three was about their community and nation and defining LF2020's vision for Fiji in 2030.

The participants were fortunate to have an evening with a Toastmaster, one of our own Alumni, Veronika Naiwaqa LF2015 who shared tips on public speaking, questioning techniques and thought structures. This led to the group implementing ahh and umm counting throughout the weekend and will do so into their program sessions that follow. Now we *ahhh* are more *umm* aware when we hear each other speak.

The second evening was spent watching the movie *Invictus* which had many lessons on leadership to draw from and which started the reflections for day 3.

Of course, our overnight sessions and retreats always include early morning wellbeing activities and LF2020 were up early to participate, well at least for the first morning everyone did. 😊 😊



Session Reports

The following are activity reports, in summary, of some of the sessions, site visitations and group retreats that have taken place so far. Traditionally, working groups are assigned to these reports, and the five Teams of Tuitui, Tabua, Tagimoucia, Tilapia and Tauratale shared in the responsibilities of tracking and evaluating these sessions.

An Overview of Fiji's History

As future leaders of tomorrow it is important to understand the people you are leading, the country you intend to develop and the historical background. Like doctors, we need to examine and understand the medical history of our country before we can understand how to manage a condition. Fiji is special with a very unique history. What has happened in the past with Fiji is a direct result of the unique make up of its people, the history they share and the leadership that has brought it through each trying time.

As future leaders we need to know where we came from, in order to know where we are going. With COVID-19, this group of young leaders has a crucial situation before them. The world's leaders are under the microscope, the survival of nations is now hanging on the actions of those who lead and as young leaders, whilst we may not be in the stronger positions of power, we do have power to make a difference. We have power to influence, to bring about change, because no matter how small, small pebbles in a lake can still make big ripples and waves.

These were some takeaways from LF2020's first session on Fiji's History that was held on Wednesday 18th March.

The tour of the Museum provided insight as to the museum procedures, Fiji's history and the collections of artifacts available to help tell the story of Fiji. The presentation, whilst brief, tapped into an interesting aspect of first contact and settlers and highlighted the interesting fact of the linguistic similarities with South East Asia. Following that speakers, Professor Sudesh Mishra, Professor Vijay Naidu and Dr Sandra Tarte took participants through Fiji from pre-independence to date, while Professor Jon Fraenkel connected with us through Zoom and presented on Fiji's changing electoral system. He also challenged participants about leadership and got them to reflect further on what they have discussed over the course of the day and what was to come for Fiji amid the COVID-19 crisis.

And behold, the reality of what our speakers challenged us on struck us the day after this Session when Lautoka was locked down following the first COVID-19 case.

Luckily the Leadership Fiji Secretariat reassured us to remain calm and arranged to connect us all through Zoom for a check-in and to give our views on how we wanted the rest of the year planned out. We now look forward to our digital sessions and the future of LF2020.



Activities, Events, News & More

Courageous Conversation – Diversity & Inclusion

We kicked off with our first Courageous Conversation on Diversity & Inclusion with Malcolm Fiahlo at the US Embassy in Suva on Thursday 27th January. Malcolm has worked in the Diversity & Inclusion space for almost three decades in Australia where he held senior roles across organisations in the government, community based and higher education sector.

In this Courageous Conversation in a lunch and learn format, Malcolm took the 30 registered attendees through the unconscious bias, understanding privilege, LGBTQI and the importance of having an ALLY.

For most that were present, this Courageous Conversation pushed them out of their comfort zone and opened their views about diversity and inclusion. Time caught up on us with some attendees leaving with so many questions not asked. We look forward to having another “deeper” Conversation with Malcolm later in the year.

As noted by diversity advocate Vernā Myers who aptly puts it, “Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance.”



Malcolm pictured 3rd from left with Leadership Fiji Alumni Sunil Kumar and Fareesha Shah of LF2017 and Jeetesh Kumar LF2011, at the launch of the LF2020 Program and FL2018 Fellows Induction

Paying it Forward for Future Leaders

A keen group of Leadership Fiji Alumni continued with our “pay it forward” initiative of facilitating leadership and communication training for student leaders in high schools and primary schools who reached out to Leadership Fiji for support. These sessions were provided from February to mid-March.



Some of our LF Alumni who turned up on a Saturday in early January at our Leadership Fiji Home to refresh the leadership and communication training material. (L-R) Ioane Nawaikula LF2009 and LF Program Coordinator, Sharyne Fong LF2005 and LF CEO, Sowani Nabukavou LF2011 and Viliame Waqalaivi LF2017

Welcome to our New Partners

We welcomed two new partners to our Leadership Fiji family in January, Port Denarau Marina and Tower Insurance Fiji.



Port Denarau Marina CEO, Cynthia Rasch signs up their MOU with our LF CEO on 3rd January



Tower Insurance CEO, Veilawa Rereiwasaliwa LF2017 hands over their cheque to LF CEO on 16th January

Shurti Kumar LF2019 Connecting Beyond Fiji

The Pacific Connect dialogue was held in Brisbane from 16th to 18th February, and our LF Alumni Shurti Kumar LF2019 was selected by the International Democratic Centre for Partnerships (IDCP) to be part of this initiative.

The dialogue brought together women from the Pacific and Australia who were involved in social entrepreneurship and were emerging leaders in their home countries. The objective of the dialogue was to do capacity building and to establish a platform for collaboration and partnerships between participants.

Shurti said “this dialogue was a wonderful learning opportunity for me, it brought to light the various initiatives that Pacific women are part of to better their community and country.”

The women had amazing ideas, from chatbots that help domestic and sexual survivors, to providing solar electricity in the remote parts of PNG. The stories about taking ownership to solve problems that these Pacific women (and societies) encounter was heartwarming and spoke of the strength and resilience of the Pacific people.

Shurti added “this was a platform in which I connected to other change makers and the many amazing women who often work behind the scenes. As a young aspiring leader, I have learnt a lot and have built lifelong bonds with this tribe of talented, strong and empowering women, and am excited to use the skills I picked up to build a better tomorrow.”

ICDP is an independent, non-profit, non-political organization that encourages and facilitates dialogue, discussions and better relationships between current and emerging Pacific and Australian leaders in government, civil society and the private sector on common challenges.



Shurti with fellow attendees at the Pacific Connect Dialogue in Brisbane, in her dress of many colours, far left in the 2nd row

Leadership During COVID-19

We hosted the first of a series of Webinars on 30th March as a stage to support each other and our communities during this COVID-19 crisis.

As an organization that promotes community and values-based leadership programs, we saw the need to take the lead in this conversation. This also aligns with a couple of our mission statements; to provide a forum for networking, personal development and exchange of ideas and to create opportunities for communication between leaders across communities.

We had 40 attendees from across Fiji, Australia, New Zealand and China who came together digitally to learn off each other’s shared experience about leading during this COVID-19 crisis. We were fortunate to have amongst us a young Fijian living in China who is co-partner of an export business where she shared her experiences. China was the first to be hit by this crisis and just hearing what she shared helped reassure most of us that we need to tread a different path after this is all over. We also learnt from other attendees about how they were leading through this crisis and got some tips from a Risk Advisor attendee on what to do to limit business risks at this time.

We left the Webinar with a feeling of hope that we are all in this together, and that adaptive leadership is needed in this time of crisis to lead our people, communities and society in adapting to the new normal.

Join us for our next Webinar on Coping with COVID-19 that is scheduled for Tuesday 14th April. Register and be part of the conversation. Visit our socials on Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter to register online. #TogetherWeCan Here are some attendees snapped during the Webinar. Picture credit: Patricia Mallam.



Meeting the NZ Prime Minister

Our CEO, Sharyne Fong LF2005 and LF Alumni Glenis Yee LF2006 and a Partner at Munro Leys were invited to the women leaders’ lunch with the Honorable New Zealand Prime Minister, Ms Jacinda Ardern at the New Zealand High Commission residence during her visit to Fiji in February.

What an amazing inspirational woman leader she is. As Glenis rightfully said, “it was a privilege to meet such a phenomenal woman”.



Pictured (L-R) Sharyne Fong LF2005; Hon. NZ Prime Minister, Ms Jacinda Ardern; Glenis Yee LF2006 and Dr Sandra Tarte of USP who also speaks at our Leadership Fiji History Session

FIA Technical Workshop

Our CEO was invited to speak at the Fiji Institute of Accountants Technical Workshop that was held at the Warwick Resort on 13th March on the topic Ethical Leadership.

Sharyne shared that one cannot discuss ethical leadership without first looking at ethical behavior. A CEO is really a Chief Ethics Officer and it is everyone’s responsibility to be CEO. Ethics has to be at the core of each person, it is a practice that is beyond any profession, it is driven from the heart.



Upcoming Sessions & Events

Human Rights & Media Session
Digital Connect
Wed 22 April 2020

Law & Order & Govt Machinery
Digital Connect
Thurs 23 April 2020

Poverty & Social Welfare
Digital Connect
Wed 6 May 2020

Fiji's Economy & Infrastructure
Digital Connect
Wed 20 May 2020

Adaptive Leadership Series
Digital Connect
Check our socials

Courageous Conversation
Digital Connect
Check our socials

Environment Session
Venue: TBC
Wed 3 June 2020

Mid-Year Retreat
Venue: TBC
Fri & Sat 19 & 20 June 2020

we are social →   

Partners Acknowledgement



The Fiji Times

Bondwell



Digicel



For more information about Leadership Fiji visit our website leadershipfiji.org.

You can contact Leadership Fiji on Phone: +679 330 4664 or email: information@leadershipfiji.org

If you have any questions or need to contact Leadership Fiji, please contact us [here](#).