

# God's Pacific People & Institute for Research and Social Analysis

## NEWSLETTER

*'For a dynamic Christian presence in the Pacific Islands'*

Volume 1, June 2016

Issue 2

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**SPECIAL  
EDITION**

### *Editorial*

*Bula Vinaka!* Welcome friends to this **special edition** of the GPP-IRSA newsletter.

The GPP and IRSA departments are currently undergoing some substantial organizational and programmatic changes. Whilst staying true to their original mandates and what they were set up to be, the programmes are now integrating.

As such, we have been happy to welcome our new joint-Director, Mr. Aisake Casimira, a well-known and active figure in the life and work of the Pacific churches. With his experience, expertise, fresh insights and creative thinking, the programmes will be able to continue delivering quality programmes and research work for the region as a whole.

Despite these positive changes in the life and work of the programmes, we are sad to farewell a long-serving PTC faculty member and former Director of the Institute for Research and Social Analysis—Prof. Manfred Ernst.

He leaves behind a unique legacy marked by 21 years of commitment to the College. GPP and IRSA will strive to continue to uphold the quality of research and program delivery as he did.

It deserves to be highlighted here that, for the first time in the life of the College, a PTC graduation has taken place outside the College residence. In May 2016, 23 heads of schools from around Vanuatu were awarded undergraduate certificates in Leadership and Management—after 4 weeks of intensive workshops and months of assignment writing. The degrees were awarded by Prof. Ernst and for him, it was a rewarding and fulfilling experience as one of his last deeds at the College.

The College, through the IRSA and the GPP, is increasingly going 'on wheels' in our region. And it is just the beginning of an exciting journey!

From the team, we wish you happy reading.

Anna Anisi

## *PTC farewells Prof. Manfred Ernst*

*By Tessa Mackenzie*

Returning to Germany after 21 years in the Pacific is a big step for Professor Manfred Ernst, but the footprint he has left is deeply embedded in the sands of the College and the Institute.

Appointed as the first Director of the Institute for Research and Social Analysis after over two years on the planning committee, Professor Manfred has steered the Institute with wisdom and dedication that has led to the production of three pieces of major research and a series of capacity building workshops for the Churches of the Pacific region.

Originally from Germany, Professor Manfred first arrived in the islands to do research into the advent of new religious movements into the region, resulting in the publication “Winds of Change”. A major follow-up project was conducted and finally launched in 2006 entitled “Globalisation and the Re-Shaping of Christianity in the Pacific Islands” which serves as an important resource book into understanding globalisation by unpacking its impacts on Pacific societies and churches.

After a few years back in Germany working for Bread for the World he came to PTC in August 1998 as Programme Development Officer for the College. The Jovili Meo Mission Centre is one of the outcomes that is a fitting reminder of his hard work. He also supervised the enlargement of the Library, the construction of new staff houses, upgrading the sports complex, the installation of a proper drainage and sewage system, the PTC fence, and the alteration of classrooms. With this management role he combined part-time teaching in the Ministry Department. These experiences made him the most suitable choice

to be the first Director of the Institute when it was established in April 2008. Through these eight years, he has skilfully led teams of researchers for IRSA major research projects published as “Voices of the People” in 2013. Exploring democratic development in the Fiji Islands this publication is still making an impact on Pacific thinking about democracy. For this research, Manfred led an in-depth training in Qualitative Research methods for a team of young researchers, before they were sent out to interview, and conduct focus group discussions.

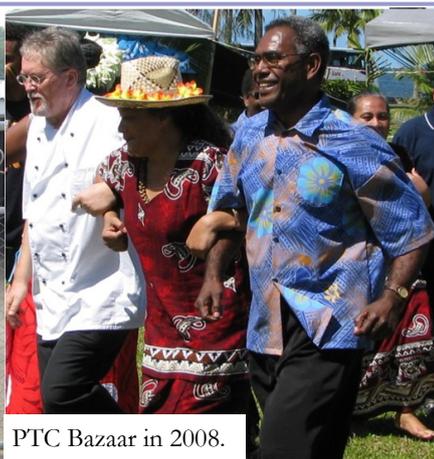
The second research project, “Strengthening Ecumenical Relations” in the region is due to be completed in the next six months and it is hoped that it will help lead to closer cooperation between the Churches as they face the many pressing current social challenges.

Responding to the needs of the Pacific Churches to address the impact of rapid social change, Professor Manfred led the development of Social Analysis short courses in workshop style and later the additional courses in Leadership and Management. Originally intended to be for interested church leaders and lay people, these courses further developed into the Capacity Building for Social Transformation programme in conjunction with God’s Pacific People trainings in peace building and counselling, offering opportunities for an Undergraduate Certificate for those who complete the required further reading and assessment tasks.

The first graduation ceremony to be held outside of the College that took place in Vanuatu in May this year when twenty three school leaders and teachers were awarded the Undergraduate Certificate in Lead-



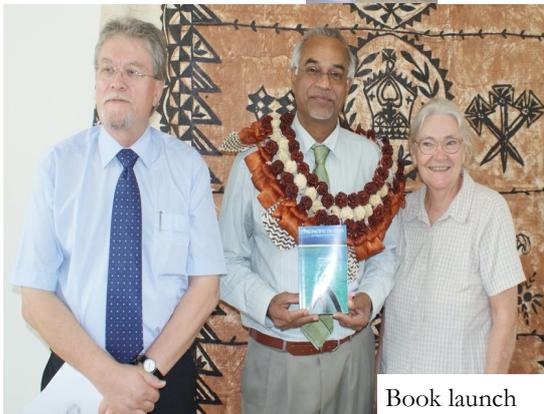
Manfred and the Principal



PTC Bazaar in 2008.



The opening of the Mission Centre in 2004



Book launch



Leadership and Management Graduation, Vanuatu 2016



Coaching PTC soccer kids



Research team: 'Voices of the People'



Manfred's wife, Elena, active in the Women's Programme



ership and Management was a fitting culmination of Professor Manfred's eight years of leadership of the Institute.

The professional works he leaves behind at PTC are not the only things he and others will remember and measure him by. He has over the years established many dear connections to the people and places in the Pacific. In his earlier years he has also been actively involved in coaching soccer boys and girls from the Under 9 grades to Under 16. Furthermore, he used to enjoy a good bowl of 'kava' around the 'tanoa' whilst sharing stories with PTC community members, construction staff and friends discussing all sorts of mat-

ters of life.

This expert Pastry Chef, with degrees in Political Science and Modern History, and youthful research experience in a then politically volatile Latin America, has left a very rich legacy for the Institute and for the College.

As he returns to Germany with his wife Elena and their Son for his retirement. We wish him many happy years with good health and interesting new experiences.

*Vinaka vaka levu* Manfred,  
Till we meet again!



PTC Farewells Manfred & Elena

## *New Director, New Beginnings*

*By: Tessa Mackenzie*

Following the agreement in January to seek a joint Director for GPP and IRSA, the good news is the appointment of Mr. Aisake Casimira. Casi, from the island of Rotuma, is well known to the Churches and among civil society organisations in Fiji and the region through his work with the Fiji Council of Churches at the turn of the century and the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy (ECEA) and his recent nine years with the Pacific Conference of Churches. He is familiar with IRSA having been a member of the Strategic Think Tank, including serving as Chairperson for some years, and also assisting with IRSA workshops. He also worked with GPP, in particular with the former Director, Rev. Rosalyn Nokise, on the Viwa Mission Conference and the Commission on Mission and Theology (CMT).

Casi grew up on the island of Rotuma and completed his secondary schooling with a final two years at St. John's College, Cawaci. From there he studied at the Pacific Regional Seminary for three years before taking a break to re-think his future. He went farming first on

the mainland of Viti Levu and then worked at the Forum Secretariat as a Research Assistant for two years. Then he went back to Rotuma to farm again to help his father pay for the education of his younger siblings.

In 1991 Casi re-joined PRS and completed his studies but, having met the lady who has become his life partner, he withdrew from ordination. He went for further studies and upon his return to Fiji he was employed by the Fiji Council of Churches Research Group when they established an office. The Research Group soon developed into the independent organisation, ECEA, with Casi as its Director where he remained until 2006 when he joined the staff of PCC.

Casi is married to Sulu and they have two sons and an adopted daughter.

Joining GPP/IRSA as Director, Casi sees that GPP and IRSA have important roles and one of those is to help build the capacity of the Churches to constructively meet the issues before them and to make the Christian presence more visible in the region. He knows the Churches have the potential to gather in solidarity to face issues and they have the capacity to bring Christian values collectively to the forefront of decision-making in the Pacific. He is excited by the challenges of finding the best way for GPP and IRSA to work in partnership together and with the College.



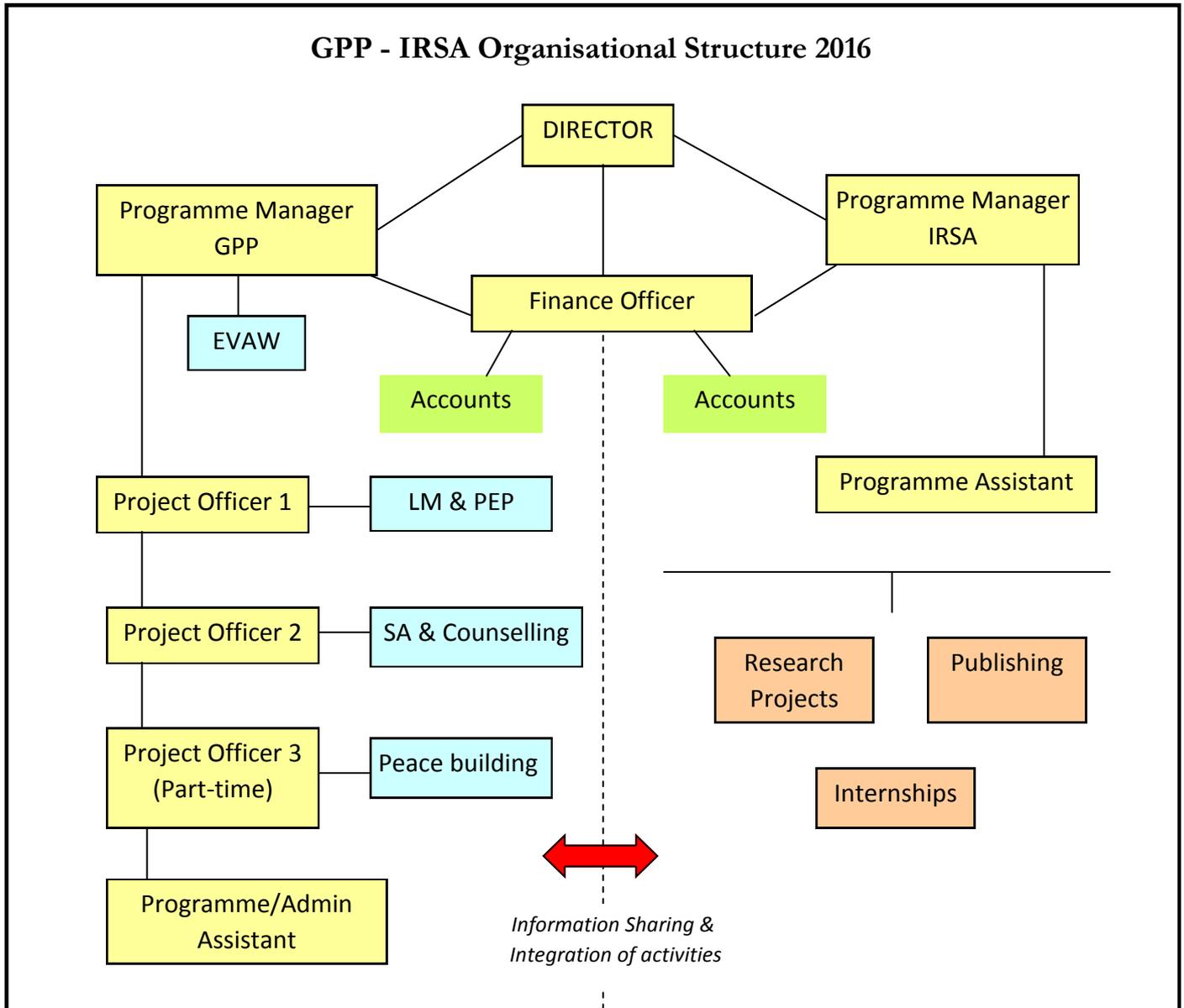
# Re-structuring of GPP-IRSA

By: Rev. Raki Tigarea

The GPP and IRSA programmes at the Pacific Theological College have been going through a new restructuring process. One of the primary reasons for this was the difficulty to finding replacements for both outgoing Directors. Added to this was the perceived need to bet-

ter integrate and link mission and research. The work of the GPP and IRSA should not be seen separately; but they ought to reinforce, support and enhance each other to provide the opportunity to flourish in making positive outcomes. On that basis, an organizational restructure was seen as vital for the pro-

grammes to stay on track. Such changes have made an impact on how information is shared in taking responsibility for certain areas. A consultation process between the GPP and IRSA departments took place in January 2016, endorsed by the PTC executive committee. More consultations are still



ongoing.

The new restructure (see graph) defines activities such as task allocation, coordination and supervision that are directed towards the achievement of the organizational aims. It also indicates the allocation of responsibilities for different personnel, and their functions. The two departments IRSA and GPP are currently under one Director - Mr. Aisake Casimira as of the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016. This has been the first step taken in a longer process of integration.

Currently, the programmes still operate under separate project funds which allows for some autonomy. The Director will oversee the two

operational arms of the programmes as the head of both programmes.

The two operational arms have programme managers: one for research (IRSA) and the other for mission (GPP). Hence, the programme managers will support the Director on the implementation of the components offered.

For the GPP, responsibilities for project officers are to plan, coordinate, implement, monitor and follow-up in their respective areas of work. The responsibilities also involve internal reporting on project compo-

nents. Also included in the restructure is the position of administrative and programme assistant; this person is responsible to the director, and working closely with the programme managers and project officers taking care of the logistics involved. The programme finance officer for the two programmes is exclusively responsible for programme finances. The core tasks are to liaise with donors, write-up financial reports, manage programme budgets and coordinate funding request and audits.

## GPP Capacity Building Courses for Pacific Churches

*July 2016– June 2019*

*By Ana-Latu Dickson*

GPP will continue to offer training courses and professional development workshops for the coming project phase. The courses and training fall under three components. They are: a) Capacity-building courses and workshops; b) Personnel Exchange (PE); and c) Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW).

The training courses are: Social Analysis (SA), Leadership and Management (L&M), Pastoral Counselling, and Pacific Peace-building Training Intensive (PPTI).

The courses are offered for academic credit and/or professional development. God's Pacific People are grateful indeed to Bread for the World for the continuous funding support.

### **Capacity-Building courses:**

#### **Social Analysis**

*Project Officer: Rusila Naboumiu*

*Ph: +679 3311100*

The course introduces Social analysis as a practical tool for linking faith with justice, peace and development issues in the various contexts of the Pacific Islands. The course helps participants to understand justice, peace

and development issues against the background of their Christian faith. Participants come to understand why the church must be concerned about the many social issues facing the Pacific Islands today. Case studies challenge participants to ask critical questions about economic, political, religious and cultural factors that affect the way they do ministry in the Pacific Islands. Participants also learn to create strategies of pastoral and social action in response to the issues they face.

Social Analysis will be offered for

professional development, primarily for those working in areas of social justice in the churches, though representatives of NGO/CSOs may also take part.

### **Leadership and Management**

*Project Officer: Lynne Lala*

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One of the major challenges for churches and civil-society organizations in the Pacific (NGO/CSOs) is to equip their leaders and staff with the skills and knowledge to lead, manage and develop their organizations, projects and programmes effectively. This training course will provide an introduction to a range of models and practical skills for effective leadership and management modelling leadership that focuses on relationships and matches the context in which training takes place.

It will be offered both as a certificate course within the framework of PTC accreditation (four components of one week each, divided into two blocks – 1 & 2, 3 & 4) and for professional development (two components of one week each, delivered together).

### **Pacific Peacebuilding Training Intensive (PPTI)**

*Project Officer: Rev. Raki Tigarea*

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The PPTI is a core component designed to address the tensions, conflict and unrest in the Pacific. Its aim is to institutionalize various peace-building techniques, beginning with the individual, through to communities and agencies of society such as the Church, and to other civil society organizations and state agencies. The PPTI is, therefore, an attempt to help individuals and communities to find ways of resolving conflict in a non-violent manner. This carefully tailored course acknowledges past hurts, trauma and pain of the Pacific and provides the space and processes that can bring healing and transformation.

The PPTI courses are planned as two-week in-country courses.

### **Pastoral Counselling**

*Project Officer: Rusila Nabouniu*

Counselling will be offered in this project phase as a four-week certificate course (two blocks of two weeks). The course aims to equip ministry and field workers with the skills to provide support and care to parishioners and other persons seeking counselling. It introduces counselling skills that are relevant to Pacific communities. These include narrative and family therapies with indigenous approaches. This skills-set enables ministers, lay workers and community volunteers to work within a guided

framework to engage persons and groups. It allows for creativity, integrating micro-skills with storytelling and drawings to reflect and find meaning in a person's life experiences, in order to map out a way forward. Attention will be paid to gender balance among the participants, and sensitivity to gender-based aspects will be encouraged in the course. Participants will be guided in exploring the theological implications of their own contexts and encouraged to consider the unhelpful aspects of some teachings heard in churches.

### **Personnel Exchange**

*Project Officer: Lynne Lala*

The PE is a unique South-South initiative involving three-month placements of individuals sent to a different country by PTC/GPP at the request of a Pacific church (occasionally, a church-related CSO). The placement can either be to build on a particular skill or to be a resource person to the receiving church or community. The PE enables individuals to become change agents in their churches and communities using skills that complement the capacity-building activities, and other context related skills. The PE sow seeds of ecumenism through ecumenical exposure, and strategic advocacy focus. There will be a focus on placements from West Papua, New Caledonia/Kanaky, French Polynesia/ Maohi Nui and Micronesia.

GPP organises placements for a minimum of 3 months (individuals) and 6 months (resource personnel).

### **Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW)**

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EVAW will develop a response to the problem of violence against women that addresses a range of the multiple factors that underlie the high incidences in the Pacific. EVAW workshops will be held in-country over the next 3 years working with women, men, and strengthening male advocacy for the prevention of violence against women.

The emphasis of the EVAW measures in 2016-2019 will be breaking the silence and highlighting the total unacceptability of violence against women and girls.

Currently EVAW is being offered for professional development.

## *English Language for Ecumenical Engagement*

*By Lynne Lala*

GPP's three-month English language for ecumenical engagement course came to an end on the 3rd of June, 2016. The course ended on a high note, with not only a special farewell morning tea hosted by the God's Pacific People Programme (GPP) and the PTC Community but also the awarding of certificates of participation to the students by the Acting Principal/Dean of the College, Rev. Dr. Gwayaweng Kiki.

The participants were sad wishing that the training had been longer than three months. Aironi Bero-tabui, from West Papua, shared that though the training was short, what he learnt was valuable for the work he is doing. It has been

encouraging and rewarding to see the participants excel in their daily class learning, despite the challenges, they progressed well.

The students enjoyed being part of PTC Community life: the morning chapel services, taking part in some of them; and the PTC feasts and functions held now and again. They found it very rewarding being part of the PTC youth community. Interacting through song, dance and sports with other young people in the community enhanced their English communication skills.

The students were very happy when the PTC youth took part in the G20 Regional Interfaith Summit preparatory meeting organized by PTC. For them, it was a very special time

as they were part of the youth that danced and helped with the preparations.

We hope that they will be committed to strengthen the networks they have now established with other participants from the region through the English Course.

Last but not the least, I would like to take this opportunity to say a big "Vinaka vakalevu" to their tutor, Mrs. Raibe Katonibau, for her time, her patience, her understanding and her commitment in tutoring these students. May God continue to bless her in her ministry!



Front row - English participants and Mrs Katonibau . Back row - GPP staff and Director Mr Aisake Casimira

## *A Tribute to Robert Jitmau*

By Lynne Lala



Robert Jitmau came for the English language course conducted through GPP in 2015; he was from West Papua. We at GPP remembered him as a very sociable person, full of fun, very easy to get to know and full of jokes, and a very caring person. One special gift that he left us with and which

reminds us deeply of Jesus' love for the little ones was this. He had many friends in the Suva Market and he would often go there on Saturdays to help sell cassava for his friends. He loved the Suva market and its people. He often shared about his dreams of helping the women of West Papua have their own traditional market place like the Suva market which is clean,

safe and where the women can sell their produce in freedom.

We at GPP also remember him for another reason. Rev. Allan Aubrey Boesak once said that "When we go before Him, God will ask, 'Where are your wounds?' And we will say, 'I have no wounds.' And God will ask, 'Was there nothing worth fighting for?'" Our dear friend Robert died early this year for what he believed in, the freedom of his people and his land, and he will surely be unashamed to show God his wounds. May his example give us the courage to stand on the ground that he once stood for freedom and on the belief that all people are created free and are meant to be free to pursue their dreams and to live in peace.

We will continue to remember his family in our prayers!

Until we meet again, Robert.

## Database Training—Staff Development

By: Raijieli Uluinaceva

Eight PTC staff representing 5 different programs/departments undertook a very full 3-day database training on MS Access v2007. The training was conducted by Mr. Sanjesh Roy, a Senior Training & Development Officer from the Viti Solutions Training Academy, on April 11 – 13 April. He covered across 3 levels: Microsoft Access Basic, Microsoft Access Intermediate and Microsoft Access Ad-

vanced.

A certificate of accreditation for each of the three levels was awarded to everyone at the end of the 3 days upon successfully completing both the theory and practical aspects in the training sessions.

A database is an important tool for managing large amounts of data or information and it is designed to create, store, organise

and manage information in electronic records which can be useful in any organization. We are thankful to the GPP program for coming up with the initiative of introducing the training making it possible for other staff to attend. The training was very challenging to most of us as it was something new and there was so much to grasp; at the same time, it was interesting and exciting.



Above: The MS Access database training staff development training course was well attended by PTC staff, incl. GPP and IRSA.

## Leadership and Management Workshop — Vanuatu

By: Raijieli Uluinaceva

A two-week training on Leadership & Management was conducted in Port Vila, Vanuatu by the Institute for Research & Social Analysis from 9<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016. This is the second time the course had been offered by the Institute for Principals, Acting Principals, Head

Teachers, and Teachers from the six provinces around the country. The first L&M workshop for such a cohort was offered in 2015.

The Leadership & Management training was mandated by Vanuatu's Ministry of Education and taken up as an initiative by the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu

Education Authority (PCVEA) to implement the training from 2015 and beyond. The aim of the workshop was to provide the participants with knowledge and practical skills that will assist their development for effective leadership and management suited to their context taking into consideration the

schools, communities and churches they are involved in.

Facilitators for the workshop were Dr. Richard Davis, Mr. Paulo Balainakorodawa, Professor Manfred Ernst and Mr. Geoffrey Nainoca who are specialized in the different areas covered in the training. The total participant intake for the training was 40 of which 24 participants were male and 16 were fe-

male representing both primary and secondary schools.

The training is delivered in two blocks of 2-week workshops and this was the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the workshop. The second phase of the workshop will be offered from 22<sup>nd</sup> August – 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2016. For this workshop, participants are expected to complete 8 reading assignments and 2 major

assignments within three months. Some of the participants have already submitted assignments and they are all looking forward to completing the course. Each participant will receive an accredited undergraduate certificate in leadership and management at the end of the training if they successfully complete the course.



Photo credit: PCVEA

*Above: The participants of the Leadership and Management workshop held in Port Vila—Vanuatu.*

## *L&M Graduation for Vanuatu School Teachers*

*By: Raijieli Uluinacena*

A total of 23 qualified teachers from schools across Vanuatu were the first to obtain undergraduate certificates after successfully completing the Leadership & Management course that was offered by the Institute for Research and Social Analysis under the IRSA/GPP capacity-building for social transformation project in 2015. Throughout the course, participants were required to complete

16 reflective reading assessments and 4 major assignments on top of the 4-week intensive workshop training.

The graduation ceremony was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and was attended by family and friends of the graduates including the 40 participants who are currently undergoing the 2016 Leadership & Management Training. Amongst invited guests was the Honorable Minister of

Education for Vanuatu – Mr. Jean Pierre Nirua, Moderator Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu—Ps. Kalorongo Ova, Assembly clerk Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu—Ps. Allen Nafuki, Vanuatu Director of Education Services – Mr. Roy Obed and Vanuatu Council of Churches representative—Mr. Shema Tema - Vanuatu Council of Churches representative.

Mrs. Elina Gilu, one of the graduates who has been a Principal at

Vila North School since 2014 delivered a speech on behalf of the graduates and stated that during and after the training, a lot of things have been learnt and achieved. She stated that she had learnt the importance of acknowledging funders, partners and others who were involved in various school projects. She stated that *'In doing so, I noted that agencies and other funders came in to assist which resulted in having almost all Vila North*

*School [cyclone Pam] damaged buildings being reconstructed by January 2016.'*

She went on to state that the training had equipped her with various new skills to assist her in her role as principal.

*'Before attending the training, I had no idea about how to write project proposals for school projects. After the training, with acquired knowledge of how a project proposal should be written and submitted, a*

*proposal to the MoE seeking funding assistance for the 2nd phase of a 3-unit classroom for my school, has been submitted, a project I am still hoping will yield positive results sometime soon'.*

The graduation was also hailed a success because it was the first time ever that PTC has held a graduation outside of PTC.



*Above: Leadership and Management participants of 2015 graduate in Port Vila, Vanuatu. Certificates were presented by Prof. Manfred Ernst.*

## Research Updates

By Anna Anisi

Interesting progress is being made by IRSA and its research consultant's team on the research project entitled 'Strengthening Ecumenical Relations in the Pacific' (SERP). Just recently, from the 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> of May, the research consultants team met in Suva to discuss preliminary findings emanating from the writ-

ing-up of country reports which include: Samoa, American Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and PNG.

The research team also discussed how to move forward given the new timeframe to complete the project by the end of December 2016. Seeing that the project would officially come to an end by De-

cember, an official book launch is planned for February 2017. It is hoped that the publication will become a useful resource book for church leaders and decision makers, students and teachers of theological schools, faith based organisations and their partners, and interested academics. It also aims to provide impulses for ecumenical

renewal and strengthening of ecumenical cooperation concerning matters of church life and unity as well as socio-cultural, political, ecological, economic and gender issues.

Although country reports are still in their draft stages, some interesting points emerged. First, the team wrestled with the observation of why there was no 'common definition' of ecumenism as understood by most of the respondents. Ecumenism is complex. In principle, it seems that the idea of ecumenical-living is not grounded as a way of life. Thus, there remains a gap, especially on a structural level. However, what is true at the institutional level (where structures rule)

must not be the same at grass-roots level. Obviously there is a lot of interaction among churches and/or church members at that level which often might not be recognized as being ecumenical but would represent such practice.

Other preliminary findings were that church leadership issues in various countries have made the ecumenical scene look 'unhealthy' and lacking in creativity. There also is evidently little solid commitment in terms of financial contributions. In some contexts National Council of Churches (NCCs) are weak and riddled with problems. Some NCCs in the region are becoming more politicized and development-focused,

but avoid the 'taboo' divisive issues of the sacraments. Ecumenical organisations are also currently not dealing with the aggressive stance of some churches towards conversion of members from one denomination to another and this causes ongoing conflicts in communities.

Furthermore, it is becoming evident that the individual churches in the various island states entertain plans to set up their own universities and/or upgrade their own institutions, thus leaving less room for ecumenical institutions like the PTC.

As the analysis of data is further woven into the fabric of this publication, enhanced meanings and patterns will develop.

## *Reflections from the IRSA Intern*

By *Ana Waqanokonoko*



I was attached as an intern at the Institute of Research and Social Analysis (IRSA) from the 7<sup>th</sup> of March - 27<sup>th</sup> of May, 2016. When I first applied for the internship I thought it would be quite interesting as I found myself immersed in a theological community filled with Pacific diversity. This was a great ecumenical experience - as I had the opportunity to interact and understand people who come from different ethnic background and different Christian denominations.

My first perception of PTC was that it was only a theological school but I later found out that there are other things that the school deals with. From my understanding, apart from being purely a theological school, it also deals with issues that are affecting the churches in the Pacific. This is looked after by the IRSA and GPP departments.

Research at IRSA, I assumed, was to assist PHD or master's degree students with their research needs. However, during my first few

weeks there I understood that the IRSA is an important part of PTC that investigates research needs for the Pacific churches and community as a whole. I also assumed that the internship would be something quite easy for someone who had no work experience and was fresh out of University, however that was wrong. The standard of work was much higher than what I had expected! From this I realized how important it was to value 'time'. At first, I assisted with the preparation of materials for the Leadership and Management workshop in Vanuatu. From this I learnt how a workshop is set up and prepared. It was not easy as this was a workshop being prepared in a country which was outside of Fiji. Therefore finance had to be sorted out and the teaching material had to be precise and well prepared.

Later I also assisted the Director with transcripts and summary re-

port writing for the current 'Strengthening Ecumenical Relations Research Project'. Conducting some summary reports was quite challenging for me as I was not familiar with some aspects being discussed, although with the guidance of the Director I managed to complete it.

As the internship progressed, the work started to become more complex for me. I had to collect data from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics and the Registrar of Titles office in Suva. In school I would only conduct desk or internet-based research but conducting research for IRSA taught me a lot about research 'out in the field'. It boosted my confidence in being able to search for information directly (in person) from relevant sources. It was interesting to know of other Christian organization present in Fiji and in the region. For me, working with IRSA opened my eyes to the current

challenges and issues that the churches face. It also taught me of the relevant organizations that exist such as the Pacific Council of Churches (PCC), Fiji Council of Churches (FCC) and others. I had no idea that such organizations existed!

In general my experience at the IRSA was a wonderful learning experience. I was able to work with highly educated and experienced individuals who made me feel like part of the team in all aspects. I would like to thank the Director, Program Manager and Project Officer, for teaching and guiding me as I learnt so many things with regard to research and the Christian community of Fiji and the Pacific.

For someone who still has a lot to learn I would probably have to say that the learning really starts when you begin working!!

Thank you.

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