

TRAINING FOR TRAINERS

JOURNALISTS NEED TO BE PART OF ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTION

'WE IN THE PACIFIC ARE LIVING IN THE DEFINING MOMENT OR GLOBALLY IN ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND SHIFTS'

'This is our reality in the Pacific and is the reality of our audiences so that's why you have a moral obligation to report on it as a Pacific Islander'



From left Shamal Lal (Fiji National University Journalism Student), Kunal Deo (Media Liaison Officer Ministry of Waterways), Shania Prasad (Fiji National University Journalism student) and Milika Tabua (Fiji Live journalist) at the Fijian Media Association and Internews Earth Journalism Network Training of Trainers Workshop on environmental reporting at the Tokatoka Resort. Photo: Nicolette Chambers

FOCUS

Report



by Nicolette Chambers

We need to be part of the environmental solution. This was the underlying message at the journalism training for trainers workshop in Nadi.

With the Pacific and other smaller states in the world at the mercy of the impacts of climate change, Pacific journalists have a moral obligation about environmental issues more vigorously than before.

Pacific Environment Weekly Editor-in-Chief Lagipoiva Cherele Jackson said Pacific journalists tend to focus more on politics adding that it was our obligation to focus on environmental coverage.

"We'd rather cover weddings or the latest scandals or interesting events that take place in Government than diving into issues pertaining to the environment," she said.

"We in the Pacific are living in the defining moment or globally in environmental change and shifts.

"This is our reality in the Pacific and is the reality of our audiences so that's why you have a moral obligation to report on it as a Pacific Islander."



Front front clockwise: Director Environment Sandeep Singh, Josefa Kotobalavu (MaiTV journalist), Salvin Deo (Department of Environment), Margaret Wise (Fiji Times), Filipe Naikaso (FBC) and Makereta Komai (Pacific Island News Association) at the Fijian Media Association and Internews Earth Journalism Network Training of Trainers Workshop on environmental reporting at the Tokatoka Resort. Photo: Nicolette Chambers

She was speaking from the USA through Zoom video conferencing. She is a visiting scholar at Rutgers University.

The *Pacific Environment Weekly* produces stories on environmental issues across the region.

Lagipoiva is a pioneering Samoan woman editor. She has been reporting on climate change for the past 15 years and plays a prominent role in training and development.

She was speaking to media representatives at the Fijian Media Association and Internews Earth Journalism Network Training of Trainers Workshop on Environmental Reporting at the Tokatoka Resort.

The training is attended by media representatives including journalism and environment students from the University of the South Pacific and the Fiji National University.

Lagipoiva said: "The other argument for reporting on the environment is how much you care about your community because if you truly care about your community than you have to report on the issues that affect them and environmental issues affect every village, every child and every community in the Pacific.

"There are some gaps in environmental journalism. The gaps always come down to interest.

"So if journalists won't show interest in covering environmental stories or climate change stories we won't just get the stories."

Marine Pollution

University of the South Pacific Post-Graduate student, Andrew Paris during his presentation on marine pollution levels in Fiji said micro plastics continued to be a major problem in

the Pacific including Fiji.

"We are the creators of the problem, so we need to be part of the solution," he said.

The positive story

Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network Programme manager, Lavina Kaumaitoia said a lot of positive stories were not reported on.

"As reporters, when you speak to farmers a lot of times you will hear the negatives saying there is no market, the middleman is ripping us off, these are the kind of stories that get highlighted more in the media, but I must tell you that there is really a positive side that doesn't get reported on," she said.

The training concludes tomorrow.

Edited by Ranoba Baa

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