

TALANOA TOKTOK

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The road ahead

THE Pacific Conference of Churches has recognised that it must identify a responsible and realistic financial sustainability model.

That means integrating the environment and traditional best practice in a way churches can emulate.

Global students have taken the opportunity to visit the PCC Eco-Farm in Tailevu North to explore options which can be used or adapted in their countries.

The students visited a number of Pacific, Asian and Caribbean territories as part of their learning experience.

The Council for World Mission



FORMED in 1966, the Council for World Mission is a worldwide community of mainly Protestant Christian churches.

The organisation works to spread the knowledge of Christ throughout the world and to strengthen their 32 members in their mission work by sharing their resources of money, people, skills and insights.

Learning on the go



FOR a group of Council for World Mission trainees, exposure to the Pacific has been an unforgettable experience.

The trainees - part of the Training in Mission Programme - visited the Lomana Na Vulagi Eco-Farm in Fiji as part of their global tour.

“Some of the climate change resilience options we have seen on the Pacific Conference of Churches farm have been amazing,” a participant from Singapore said. “How fortunate that there is still land available in some Pacific countries where forests can be kept and developed.

“We must encourage agriculture where trees are not cut for the sake of making space.”

The trainees travelled by road to the farm before taking a tour on foot to see medicinal plants, a piggery and organic fertiliser production.

The tour was designed to encourage trainees to adapt what they had seen in Fiji to their home countries.

Before leaving the farm, they planted cassava - a local staple root crop - and some herbs.

They were also able to see the work on the School4Change classroom taking shape on the property.

The PCC hopes Lomana Na Vulagi will become a regular part of the CWM learning experience.

Forest class ... CWM students on the Lomana Na Vulagi Eco-Farm at Lawaki in Tailevu, Fiji

Talanoa Toktok

Piggy bank

Options for our churches

PIGS play an important role in Pacific cultures and church meetings.

From Tuvalu to Tonga, Papua New Guinea to Fiji the pig is a valuable commodity and an item of trade.

There are few Pacific cultures in which the pig is of little significance.

Every village has communal pig pens and the additional family piggeries.

The Pacific Conference of Churches, in recognition of the role of pigs, has started a breeding scheme on its Lomana Na Vulagi Eco-Farm. It's a way to encourage local communities to invest in commodities with which they are familiar.

The pigs can be sources of food and income as well as investment tools for communities and families

PCC staff member, Elia Rakavono, said most villagers had grown up caring for pigs.

"We know their habits, lifestyle, food and breeding cycle," Rakavono said.

"Now we have to learn to make them earn money for us."

At Lomana Na Vulagi, that means identifying the right breed, using organic food supplies and ultimately using pigs as sources of food and money.

"We hope to make our pig pens small banks," Rakavono said.

"When our people need money for church fundraising - sell a pig. It's simple.

"Pigs can be raised and then sold to pay school fees. There are so many ways we can apply this in daily life across the Pacific - even in organisations like the church."

Climate change to affect pigs

CLIMATE change is likely to impact regional pig production.

Research by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme shows that increased temperatures and additional salt water intrusion will be two contributing factors to decreased production.

To mitigate against this, piggeries at the PCC Lomana Na Vulagi Eco-Farm have been built under or close to large trees which provide

shade and protect structures during rain and wind.

Waste from the piggeries are converted to fertiliser to ensure the organic nature of the farm.

Research is currently in progress to identify safe ways in which to make cooking gas from pig waste.

All member churches will be encouraged to use the Lomana Na Vulagi methods.



Thank you, partners

THE Pacific Conference of Churches has expressed its gratitude to donor and partner organisations for their help in the establishment of an eco-farm and school4change.

Once completed, the 50-acre site at Tailevu in Fiji will become a model for environmental and financial sustainability using traditional wisdom and Biblical values in a modern setting.

The Presbyterian Church USA and Global Mission have been key financial supporters in the work on the farm so far.

PCC Development Manager, Netani Rika, said work would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of key partners.

“We thank God for the support and understanding of our partners and their willingness to develop sustainable development models for the Pacific through this initiative,” Rika said.

“A major donor has agreed to come on board in 2024 and that support will ensure that the infrastructure development such as roads and buildings will be completed on time.”

The PCC Executive Committee visited the farm early this year and took part in the foundation laying for the School4Change.

Picture: Former PCC General Secretary, Rev Francois Pihaatae lays the foundation at Lomana Na Vulagi