



EMERGING LEADERS

FOR THE DIGITAL WORLD

EXTRACT

This extract was originally published as part of the report Emerging Leaders for the Digital World. The full report can be accessed via <http://www.diplomacy.edu/acp/el.asp>

Anju Mangal from Fiji defines development in the context of current realities



Life has been my art. I grew up wondering what type of person I would be when I was older. We are continuously challenged to accept change but it takes time. I am trying my best to ensure that my work, thoughts, and new ideas are in sync with the changes around me. At the end of the day, we are all trying to make a difference in life.

My family is my inspiration

My approach to finding the right balance in life and transforming my ideas into reality is having inspiration. My beautiful parents have inspired me the most. I carry my parents' support, confidence, and vision with me each day of my life. Without their continuous support and nurturing, I wouldn't have felt inspired to write this piece.

My parents and brother are loving and caring people who have given me the strength to do whatever I set my heart and mind to. What inspires me most is how my parents' beautiful nature and generosity makes other people feel and how good it makes me feel when I see people's reactions to them. I both envy my parents and love them for who they are. They are simply beautiful people.

My brother is a lawyer, and he inspires me through his

knowledge and wisdom. Of course there are times when we don't see eye to eye only because we both have strong opinions, but he accepts and loves me the way I am. He also gives his whole heart to everything he does, and I admire him for his straightforward attitude to life and work.

As I write, I am grateful that I am alive. A few weeks ago, I was involved in an accident, and it certainly made me question the way I do things in life. Life is precious, and we should live it to the full but always be cautious. We never know what's coming our way. We should always take note of what we are doing.

I am part of the human race and a member of society, but I am still an individual. My identity defines me and rests firmly on one fact: that I am a woman with many thoughts and a regular life. I am a Fijian and happy to be one. Fiji is a beautiful island nation in the South Pacific Ocean made up of diverse cultures. My personal knowledge reflects other cultures and types of people in Fiji and the Pacific. I live not only with one race but with many who have different cultural and traditional values. I have learnt a lot from my people and the people in the Pacific,

and I believe that I fit in well with people from many different races. We are a multicultural society.

Keeping development in mind

The most interesting task for me is to define development in the context of current realities in the Pacific. I am working at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), a regional/international organisation that works with/for the 22 Pacific Island Countries and Territories in the region. I specialise in information, knowledge management, communications, Internet governance, ICT for development, and community-building. I am currently coordinating the development of information and communication technology (ICT) and IKM (Information Kerala Mission) activities in SPC and in an advisory role, oversee staff implementing ICT-IKM activities. I also provide leadership and am a trainer on the use of ICT

and e-learning platforms in the Pacific.

I have acquired the necessary skills in the ICT field and have successfully achieved a BSc degree and an MA in Governance. My mini research paper for the Governance course was titled: *Internet Governance in the Pacific – whether the IGF Forum is a Multi-stakeholder process*. Developed in 2009, the paper talks about Pacific participation and understanding, and its impact across Internet Governance Forum (IGF) issues. The survey helped me understand concerns, ideas, and expectations relating to the IGF. My research was a step towards understanding the Internet and ICT development in the Pacific. It helped me reach out to stakeholders, policymakers and decision-makers at national and international level who are or will be interested in improving Internet accessibility. It was geared towards helping

government sectors to consider and implement a policy and strategy that would benefit people in the Pacific.

In 2009, I successfully completed DiploFoundation's Internet Governance Capacity Building Program (IGCBP). Diplo has given the Pacific countries an opportunity to understand the concept of Internet governance and improve their knowledge on ICTs to better manage the challenges we face in the region. I am now a part-time tutor on Diplo's ACP 2011 ICT Strategy Course and was selected as a research expert for the Research Phase. I was also an ISOC Ambassador to the 2008 IGF in Hyderabad, India and a Commonwealth IG Secretariat fellow in Sharm-el Sheikh, working in close collaboration with the UN-IGF Secretariat team.

With Diplo's support, I was selected to work as a fellow for the UN-IGF Secretariat in



Geneva, Switzerland and I thank them for recognising my talent and ability to be a powerful agent of change in addressing the key challenges in our Pacific region related to IG, ICT, inclusiveness, human rights, and diversity.

I was also selected to represent my country and organisation in the Emerging Pacific Leaders Dialogue (EPLD) in 2010. EPLD 2010 brought together 120 high-calibre mid-career participants from business, government, trade unions and the community service sector selected through an open call

from more than 20 Pacific region countries/territories. It was funded and sponsored by government agencies and the private sector across the Pacific, particularly the Australian Government. During the EPLD tour, I was fortunate to meet great leaders in the Pacific and also had the opportunity to meet Princess Anne (Royal) who was the guest of honour at the EPLD conference.

Reaching out

I am continuously inspired to help facilitate discussions on Internet governance, ICT policy

and diplomacy through the participation of all stakeholders in diplomatic practice and international relations in the Pacific region. I received my introduction to the field of Internet Governance five years ago through the Pacific ICT mailing list - Pacific Chapter of the Internet Society (PICISOC). I was a Board member of PICISOC and served the board for two years. I continue to serve the interests of the Internet community and am determined to increase participation of women, youth, people with disabilities and the disadvantaged who are amongst the most neglected group in ICT.

I am also the Chairwoman of the Pacific Women in ICT Special Interest Group, which aims to help Pacific women better understand the current state of access, participation and leadership of Pacific Women in ICTs. As the Chairwoman of PICISOC_Women in technology (WIT), I try to assess issues such as applications, technology and content, and determine use of ICTs and women's participation in ICTs and development. Regionally, the SPC works to promote a regional IGF and discussions. Today, we are reaching out to a number of Pacific Islanders to study the Introductory Internet Governance and ICT Policy course.

My role is to coordinate and develop new regional capacity building programmes in information, communication and knowledge management, and ICT for development. I provide



leadership on IG issues to young people and our stakeholders in the Pacific. I have assisted with the formulation of the youth in agriculture strategy towards fostering ICT for development. I provide advisory and support role to the Youth and Agriculture Coordinator for administering and delivering programmes for youth and ICT in the community.

Collaborating with others

I am keen to work with others within my organisation, and with development partners and stakeholders to contribute to the improvement in the

livelihood of our people in the Pacific Island Countries. I also promote participatory approaches to support sustainable management of natural resources through participatory geographical information systems (GIS) and continue to coordinate appropriate training to build capacity in ICTs using the Internet to access web-based information systems within the 22 Pacific Island Countries. In 2005, our project was won the World Summit Award in the category e-culture for Participatory 3D Modelling (P3DM) for Resource Use, Development Planning and

Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. This was one of my biggest achievements.

I continue to strengthen collaboration and improve the capacity in sharing the information among our stakeholders and regional and international networks. Throughout my personal and professional life, I have come to respect the professionalism that characterises any organisation, its employees and the people we work for.

Anju Mangal works at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in Fiji. ■

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