



EMERGING LEADERS

FOR THE DIGITAL WORLD

EXTRACT

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Dalsie Greenrose Kalna Baniala from Vanuatu is raising awareness of Internet governance issues



My name is Dalsie Greenrose Kalna Baniala, which I think is the longest name in the world. I have four sisters and three brothers. There were nine of us originally but one of my brothers died. We were brought up on Aurora, which has since been renamed Maewo, part of the Vanuatu island nation. I love Maewo for its two famous and important characteristics: its water and its culture. Maewo is known as 'the water king island' as it has many streams, waterfalls, and rivers, as well as the highest rain fall. It is also famous for its traditional culture, which involves magic, sorcerers, and cultural dances.

Although our parents raised us with few financial resources, we were rich in natural resources, like food in the form of root crops. We also owned chickens, cattle, pigs, and other animals, as my family loves all types of animals.

I was a sickly child for the first six years of my life, with a right leg peripheral artery disease. For this reason, my parents did not allow me to attend school. At the age of seven, my parents finally allowed me to attend primary school because they were sick and tired of the same old, loud, monotonous chorus I sang each morning, wanting to follow my sister to school. From age 12, my illness started to fade away. I'm now enjoying a normal life, and I thank God that I'm a happy woman enjoying her new job.

A long walk to school

I attended a primary school named Gambule Primary School, located on Maewo. I had to walk three to five kilometres each day to school. My primary school days, especially at the end of the school year, were some of the greatest days of my life because I always received



school gifts for the outstanding marks I scored on my tests. In 1988, I was selected to go to Navuturiki Junior Secondary School in West Ambae. Again, my parents and I had a big fight because they were worried about who would assist me when I was sick. However, in Ambae I was very well looked after. I thank the late Michael Toka and his wife, who were so kind and whose children I spent most weekends with.

I was one of the luckiest girls on Maewo at that time in

1992, when I was selected to attend the Institutatue Nationale Technologie Vanuatu (INTV). I did my best, and I was offered a scholarship to attend the Solomon Island College of Education in 1994. Ask me who did my applications and my answer would be that I still don't know up to this day. It was a ministry who applied on my behalf. All I can remember is that I was to bring my passport and be ready to travel. I travelled with a small suitcase (which included two pillow cases, two bed sheets,

two t-shirts, and two skirts) and was the only odd traveller that day at the airport, as everyone was in their best clothes and shoes, while I was wearing my slippers. Tears rolled down my cheeks because I felt out of place, especially when they were taking our photos.

I spent three years in the Solomon Islands instead of two because I loved my friends in the Solomons and had to find a way to stay another year. I graduated in 1997 with a diploma in Finance and

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Administration and at the same time applied to work for the University of the South Pacific (USP). In 2001, I wanted to further my knowledge and applied to USP, where I was accepted and completed my BA in only two years. Later, in 2010, I was fortunate to be accepted to USP to pursue an MBA. I'm currently undertaking intensive after-hours courses to complete my MBA focusing on Telecommunications.

Establishing a professional life

In 2003, armed with my BA, I was promoted to senior clerical assistant. I worked really hard until 2008, when I left USP to join the newly established Office of the Vanuatu Telecommunications Regulator, which was just in its second week of operation, as office manager. The Office of the Telecommunications Regulator is still my baby

today. In 2010, under the former regulator's leadership, I was promoted to operations manager. I was pleased to take up the post, although telecommunications was fairly new for me. As operations manager, I have travelled to many different countries. I'm currently managing Consumer and Communications Affairs at the Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator's office in Vanuatu.

Commitment to community development

During my working life, I have also been involved with a lot of community work, including scouting, youth activities, and sports. I was a leader in the first Tagabe Scout Group and plan to one day become an executive on the National Executive. With my commitment and willingness, I am now the honorary treasurer for the Vanuatu National Scout Association.

Because beach volleyball is my favourite sport and being committed to sport activities, I ended up being elected to chair the Vanuatu Women and Sports Commission in Vanuatu. The role of the Commission is to promote more women participants in sports. With this title, I also represent Vanuatu on the Oceania Women and Sports Commission. The two bodies are regionally recognised organisations, as they fall under the umbrella of Vanuatu National Olympic Sports Association.



Capacity building

In the last two and a half years, I have been concentrating on upgrading my skills in telecommunications, as well as information communications technology (ICT) as a whole. I thank our good Lord for the opportunity I had to attend the ICANN meetings and, in particular, for learning about and coming to understand the issues regarding the Internet. From the ICANN meetings, I learnt about DiploFoundation and had the opportunity to apply for the course modules. It was tough for me at that time because the Internet was another world. At the end of the course I took on Internet governance (IG); I realised that it had really broadened

my knowledge base. Through DiploFoundation, I ended up in countries I don't think I would otherwise have gone to.

With the number of training courses I have attended, including attending the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), I have learnt a lot. I now have an idea of what IG is about, and managed a project on drafting an Internet policy for Vanuatu, which is currently open for formal public consultation <http://trr.vu>. I'm currently undertaking a role in consumer affairs of ICT where I have also taken the lead on raising awareness in rural areas on the benefits of the Internet and other ICT tools. In addition, I have also helped out with running meetings on Internet

issues in Port Vila. As part of the public consultation on IG, public meetings will be held in July 2011 to identify the main issues faced by consumers of ICT in Vanuatu. The Regulator, with my assistance, is consulting with the main stakeholders for raising awareness of and providing training on the Internet issues facing Vanuatu. This is great news. More and more awareness programmes are also being planned and are about to be implemented.

Dalsie Greenrose Kalna Baniala manages the Consumer and Communications Affairs at the Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator's Office in Vanuatu. ■

