

Written by Zarin Khan

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Recognising individual achievements and investing in staff and human resources to ensure effective and efficient service delivery to the Pacific people is a priority for the Pacific Community (SPC) and seen as a key to achieving the objectives of the organizations strategic plan.

To this end, the Pacific Community embarked on a two-phase leadership course, sponsored by the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP). SCP was pleased to support this endeavour as human resource development lies at the heart of the SCP. Conducted in two phases starting in June 2017 20 Pacific Community Divisional Directors, Deputy Directors and Senior Management, along with a senior staff member from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), took part in the Introduction to Management, Leadership and Human Resource Strategy training program. This program focused on leading and coordinating large teams of individuals who are spread out across the region and diverse in cultures, traditions and social backgrounds. The SCP engaged the Singapore's Civil Service College, to provide the intense training for SPC staff, which ended on 10th August 2017 at the Novotel Convention Center in Suva, Fiji.

Lead Trainer from the Health Sciences Authority of Singapore, Ms. Sarojini Padmanathan, highlighted the value of leadership training, in particular for organizations like the Pacific Community noting, “there are certain vital tools and practices which good leaders need to harness especially in a large organisation such as SPC which can be very challenging.”

Ms Padmanathan went on to stress, “while leaders need to be decisive, they must also have

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empathy for staff working conditions and their personal aspirations, they need to be mentors and motivators, problem solvers and be able to resolve internal conflicts which could derail or delay a project or task.”

SPC's Deputy Director Public Health Division Mr Taniela Soakai reflected on goals of the program and highlighted its value to the participants saying, “we as senior management need to have the skills to ensure adequate support is provided to individual staff to deliver services as effectively as possible. The training has focused on the eco-systems around staffing which highlights importance of motivating staff members, overcoming challenges, conflict resolution, dealing with challenging staff members and performance management.”

Participants of the course were unanimous in their recognition of its value and relevance to their work. This was summed up best by Vuki Buadromo, SPC Project Manager ISACC, Geoscience Division, who said, “The program has been a real eye opener. It has strengthened our capacity as managers to become good leaders.”

Pacific Community Deputy Director, General Ms. Audrey Aumua, was on hand to congratulate the participants and present certificates in recognition of their successful completion of the program and of their commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

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