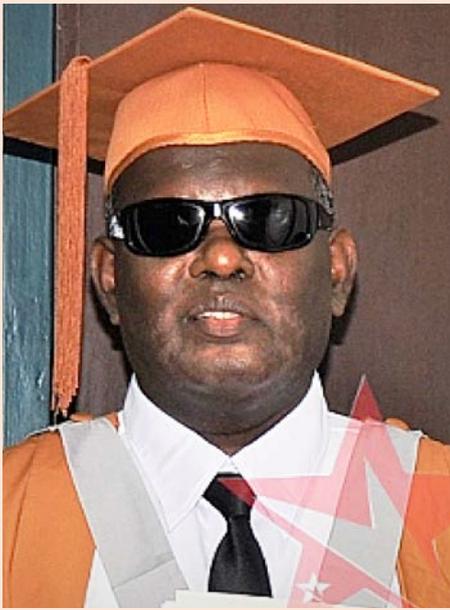


EDWIN, AN INSPIRATION FOR ALL



Edwin Babanisi.
Picture credit: Solomon Star

Edwin Babanisi, an alumnus of The University of the South Pacific (USP) is an inspiration to so many. He is the first-ever visually impaired person to have graduated with a Bachelor of Law (LLB) Degree in the South Pacific. He enrolled at USP in 2015 on a Solomon Islands Government Scholarship and graduated earlier this year.

Mr Babanisi, a father of two (2) is from the Makira Province, Solomon Islands. During his studies, his wife, Roselyn Babanisi supported him all through his journey to achieve his goal and she is elated that her husband has fulfilled his dream.

"I'd like to say that – 'Disability is not inability'. This means that if you are a person with disabilities you still can – you are able to do things as other people can do. There's always hope", Mr Babanisi says.

For instance, when Mr Babanisi joined the musicians in Church, he realised that the activities and tasks he was being given were quite minimal. He was constantly

thinking that he could do more and wanted to contribute. So in order to showcase his talents and skills, he started actively delivering more than he was expected to. This led to the group and church trusting him with more than they had earlier envisioned. It is this line of thinking that Mr Babanisi would like to encourage all of us to follow. If you want to gain respect and opportunities, then it is up to you to prove what you can do.

Prior to completing his Law Degree at USP, he completed his primary and secondary education in the 80s-90s in Fiji at Marcellin Primary School and Marist Brothers High School. He later went to New Zealand to undertake Rehabilitation Studies, which was sponsored by the New Zealand Government.

On his return from New Zealand, Mr Babanisi worked in Solomon Islands with the Solomon Islands Ministry of Health for 10 years as a community-based Rehabilitation Officer. He then returned to Fiji for further studies in 2015 to undertake the LLB programme. When asked, why did he select Law? Mr Babanisi simply said that he "enjoys arguing".

He has described his time at USP as "really, really good!" Had it not been for accessibility to most places on campus; the support of the Disability Resource Centre and the Buddy System, Mr Babanisi says, he "would not have been successful".

Comparing his experience with primary and secondary school education from the '80s and 90's when printed textbooks had to be converted to Braille, the ability to instantly access his course work on Moodle on his laptop through software such as JAWS (Job Access with Speech) and NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access) was most valuable.

Due to COVID-19, there was no formal graduation ceremony being held in the Solomon Islands this year. However, a special ceremony was held for Mr. Babanisi

IN THIS ISSUE



02
SUCCESS STORIES

03
ALUMNI PROFILE



04
WHERE ARE THEY NOW

si at the USP Campus, Lawson Tama, on 22 October 2020 to celebrate Mr Babanisi's accomplishment.

Mr Babanisi plans to continue to be associated with USP as an alumnus and contribute where he can. Working with the Solomon Islands Campus, he wants to empower other persons with a disability gain higher education and become successful in their chosen career for which he has three tips: have a spirit of determination; always focus on what you want to be, and use your knowledge and build on it!

DEVI EXCELS AT NAUSORI DISTRICT SCHOOL

Ms Pravina Devi, an alumna of USP, who completed her Certificate IV in Early Childhood Education and Care (2018) and Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care Level 5 (2019) from The University of the South Pacific (USP), Pacific Technical and Further Education (Pacific TAFE) programmes thrives and enjoys working at the Nausori District School as an Early Childhood and Education (ECE) Teacher.

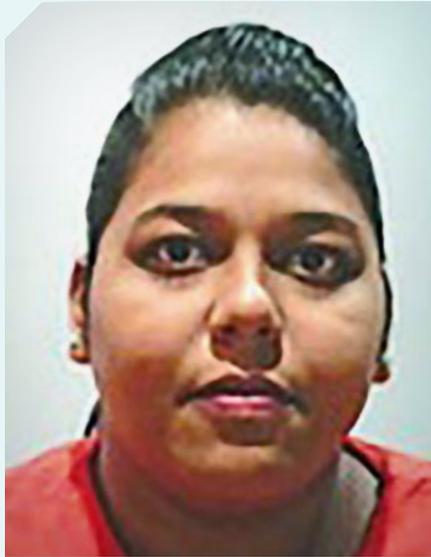
Ms. Devi who completed her latest educational achievement in 2019 said, "Pacific TAFE programmes are designed to meet the needs of different fields of work." Ms. Devi commented that the education system at USP's Pacific TAFE was very appropriate and accommodative for the demanding nature work she does.

"The education system at Pacific TAFE is very convenient, in terms of its learning environment, flexible learning modes, well equipped facilities and teaching assistance provided by the facilitators," Ms. Devi said.

"When reviewing my personal experience, Pacific TAFE provided the most convenient teaching and learning methods such as tutorials, work attachments and reading materials that helped me to achieve my goals and be successful in life."

She further commented that she would recommend USP Pacific TAFE to other students as it proved to be a life changing experience for her.

"Pacific TAFE provides affordable learning programmes and short courses with flexible learning methods which



Ms Pravina Devi

are mostly suitable to working and non-working students," she said. "I would definitely recommend other students to get enrolled in Pacific TAFE.

The Head Teacher of Nausori District School, Ms. Rita Prasad said she was impressed with the level of professionalism and work ethics displayed by Ms. Devi. "As a Head Teacher, I have seen many great teachers come and go, Pravina is one individual I have worked with who uniquely stands out," she said. "She displays great talents in managing her classroom, teaching concepts to all teaching styles and developing a genuine love in her students."

Ms. Prasad stressed that the new learning methods introduced by Ms. Devi has received overwhelming responses from ECE students.

"I have seen her grow and learn as an

educator as she began introducing innovative new teaching styles that we both saw make a difference in the way her students both behaved and learned," she said. "It's just not her teaching skills that impresses me, however Pravina is a joy to work with because of her positive attitude and ability to never give up on a child. Her commitment and empathy were also necessary and valued not just myself, but also her students' parents."

Ms. Prasad further commented that by gauging Pravina's performance it was apparent that USP met the current industry demands. "Through the performance of Miss Devi, it is apparent that the programme offered at Pacific TAFE is able to meet the current ECE demands in terms of:

- **Fostering excellence in teaching**
- **Enhancing professional image of teachers**
- **Encouraging progress in career**
- **Providing the platform for learning from others and exchanging knowledge**
- **Developing skills needed on the job more effectively.**

Nausori District Kindergarten (NDK) is attached to Nausori District School. It was established in 1937. The primary school has a roll of 394 and the ECE Centre has 44 students. Miss Pravina Devi is in charge of 15 students at ECE. NDK caters for students aged 5 years old that enter the school with varying abilities and backgrounds.



FOR PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS, CHECK OUT alumni.usp.ac.fj





Alfred Tuikoro Tora > FIJI

Programmes studied at USP: Bachelors of Commerce in Human Resources Management and Public Administration (2019)

University of London - MSc. Organisational Psychology (2020)

Business Research Analyst at Polyscape Services, United States of America

What memories do you have of your University student life and what inspired you during your studies at USP?

I distinctly remember the late nights on campus with my friends, trying to be productive while also trying to scrounge up enough to get some noodles to fill our empty stomachs. The pressure of trying to meet an assignment deadline while hoping that the lecturer gave some leniency! You can probably tell that I was not as faithful to my studies as I am now though these experiences did help mould me to the person I am today.

My greatest motivation was the desire to attain a better life through education and to contribute, as best as I could, to building a better Fiji.

Why did you choose USP and your field of study?

I chose USP because of the opportunities that it provided that no other higher education institution had at its disposal. Most importantly, the courses that I wanted to take and the quality of education I would get, but also the opportunity to meet and make new friends from various walks of life that would not have been possible anywhere else.

I did not initially apply to the Human Resources Management and the Public Administration programmes but after considering the future, they felt like the path I wanted to follow. My ambitions at that time was to help businesses through developing their greatest assets. Their People! This motivated me a lot throughout the years and has been my guiding thought towards the education I have begun to pursue after completing my studies at USP.

Describe your present job and what you enjoy about it.

I currently work in an SME landscape company based in Provo, Utah which covers Utah County, Salt Lake County and Wasatch County. I analyse the in-

"I chose USP because of the opportunities that it provided that no other higher education institution had at its disposal."

ternal atmosphere of the organisation as well as external factors that would affect profit and find solutions that can be initiated in a scalable manner in our business.

I enjoy the freedom that my schedule affords me as well as the opportunity to spend time with my family. I love the autonomy that I am given by my superiors and the thrill of leading teams in the field sometimes. The fact that I spend most of my day in the field instead of the office is a bonus that I hope to continue to have in the future.

What literature or subscriptions would you recommend for graduates (books/blogs/magazines)?

I love books that can be applied in Business as well as in Life. The following books are, in my opinion, essential for leaders in every aspect of life and not just in the professional arena. My recommendations are: The Art of War by Sun Tzu, Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu, Extreme Ownership and The Dichotomy of Leadership by Jocko Willink, and The Art of Public Speaking by Dale Carnegie. The Harvard Business Review is an essential for anyone regardless of the field that you are in. Podcasts are another form of information that I partake of on a daily basis and my recommendations on these would be The Jocko Podcast, This Working Life, Harvard Business Review IdeaCast, Business Wars Daily, and HR Works.

Please share three tips that you think would be important for current students and recent graduates that will help them start out on their career paths.

Tip 1:

Network! Always put yourself out there and connect with people that push you to be the best version of yourself.

Tip 2:

Do Not Let Fear Hold You Back: The only person that can stunt your personal and professional growth is YOU! Ask questions, send out your Resumé, and do what you most fear.

Tip 3:

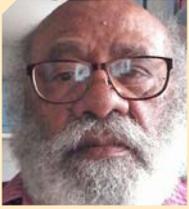
Plan Ahead: If you're a first year student or you're in your final semester, this applies to you. Have goals that are attainable but that would push you out of your comfort zone! As the famous Alexander Graham Bell once said, "Before anything else, Preparation is the key to success". The eloquence lies in the simplicity!

What would you tell someone who's considering USP?

Utilise the opportunity you have been given to educating yourself in the premium institution of the South Pacific. Make life-long friends and memories! Make the right decisions with school and your social life. Find the balance and keep it. You are going to make it no matter how difficult or long the program seems to you!

Where are they now?

1970



**Joketani
Delai**

Graduation
 • Bachelor of Arts (1979), USP
Country: Fiji
Occupation
 Retired Politician and School Teacher



**Linda
Petersen**

Graduation
 • Bachelor of Arts and Graduate Certificate in Education (1979), USP
Country: Fiji
Occupation
 Team Leader, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Support Unit at Cardno Emerging Markets, Fiji

1980



**Nafitalai
Cakacaka**

Graduation
 • Bachelor of Arts (1989), USP
Country: Fiji
Occupation
 General Manager Business Risk Services, Fiji Development Bank



**Sereicocoko
Yanuanurua**

Graduation
 • Bachelor of Science (1987), USP
 • Bachelor of Civil Engineering (1997), The University of New South Wales
Country: Fiji
Occupation
 Water and Sanitation Specialist, WASH Expert, Entrepreneur and Managing Director at Aswhy Enterprise

1990



**Shaukat
Ali**

Graduation
 • Bachelor of Arts in Business Studies (1999), USP
Country: Fiji
Occupation
 General Manager Relationship & Sales, Fiji Development Bank



**Lina
Nailatikau**

Graduation
 • Bachelor of Arts (1997), USP
 • Postgraduate Certificate in Human Resource Management (2012), USP
 • Master of Business Admin (2016), USP
Country: Fiji
Occupation
 Compliance Officer (Operations/ Strategic Administration), United Kingdom

2000



**Savita
Devi**

Graduation
 • Bachelor of Science (2009), USP
 • Master of Business Administration (2014), USP
Country: Fiji
Occupation
 Chief Digital Officer (Acting) at Canterbury and West Coast District Health Board, New Zealand



**Sonia Schütz-
Russell**

Graduation
 • Bachelor of Arts (2006), USP
 • Postgraduate Diploma in Development Studies (2012), USP
 • Masters in Diplomacy & International Affairs (2019), USP
Country: Kiribati
Occupation
 Programme Planning Officer at Pacific Community-SPC, Fiji

2010



**Josaia Cakau
Gonedai**

Graduation
 • Diploma in Leadership, Gov & Human Rights (2017), USP
 • Postgraduate Diploma in Development Studies (2018), USP
 • Master of Arts in Governance (2019), USP
 • Postgraduate Diploma in Diplomacy & International Affairs (2020), USP
Country: Fiji
Occupation
 Political & Human Rights Advocacy; Academic USP Human Rights Alumni, Researcher, Fiji



**Sou Lunn
Yee**

Graduation
 • Bachelor of Science (2017), USP
Country: Fiji
Occupation
 Quality Control Chemist at Douglas Pharmaceuticals Limited



Stay
Connected
to USP,
your
Alma
Mater!

Our professional network provides opportunities make new business contacts, obtain referrals, view professional profiles of other alumni and inform other USP alumni of your professional endeavours.

Register Online:
www.usp.ac.fj/alumni

Contact Details T: +679 3232914 E: alumni@usp.ac.fj



www.facebook.com/USPALumniNetwork



twitter.com/USPALumni



www.usp.ac.fj/alumnilinkedin

Donate to your
Alma Mater!



Online contributions which can be made using the following link:

www.usp.ac.fj/onlinepayment

Or into the following Bank account with "Alumni Fund" in the narrative:

Name of Account: The University of the South Pacific
Main Account #: 9801283301
Bank: Westpac Banking Corporation
Address: Suva Branch1 Thomson Street Suva FIJI
Branch/Swift code: WPACFJFX
BSP or IDN #: 039001

Make Education Your Priority

If you have any difficulty in accessing your Moodle shell, or any issue at all that may be preventing you from continuing your classes, please contact us.



USP CALL CENTRE

Mondays – Fridays from 8am-8pm
Saturday from 11am-4pm

CALL FREE on 1568
from any Digicel, Vodafone or Telecom Fiji phone

Email: helpdesk@student.usp.ac.fj;
moodlehelp@usp.ac.fj
or evonne.inia@usp.ac.fj

REGIONAL STUDENTS can contact their Campus Directors: www.usp.ac.fj/campuses for assistance.

The continuous assessments in your courses are being designed flexibly, **so it is not too late to resume.**

BEGIN HERE!



Shaping Pacific Futures

Your University of the future

Offers face-to-face & flexible learning and teaching, research on emerging global, regional & national issues and opportunity to innovate to become job creators.

Tel: 3231000 www.usp.ac.fj



ENROL NOW
for Semester 1, 2021

Be READY to fight #COVID19

Be **INFORMED**
Be **PREPARED**
Be **SMART**
Be **SAFE**

Be **READY** to fight **#COVID19**

For the latest health advice, go to: www.who.int/COVID-19



Protect yourself and others from getting sick

Wash your hands

- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after handling animals or animal waste




Protect others from getting sick

When coughing and sneezing **cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue**



Throw tissue into closed bin immediately after use



Clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water after coughing or sneezing and when caring for the sick




Protect others from getting sick

Avoid close contact when you are experiencing cough and fever



Avoid spitting in public



If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing **seek medical care early** and share previous travel history with your health care provider