

UniFiji to Participate in #MyFreedomDay

The University of Fiji became the first University in the country to participate in the CNN initiated programme- #MyFreedomDay when it celebrated the significant day on March 14, 2018.

The celebration, initiated by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Misir, and coordinated by the Marketing and Public Relations Officer, Ms. Shirley Prasad, was an exciting one which gave the students as well as the University staff a chance to present their views to the international community via means of a video. It also gained UniFiji international recognition as the video will be uploaded on the CNN website and Facebook page.

The 3 minute video entailed the voices of students as well as staff of the University where each spoke about what freedom meant to them.

The Assistant Superintendent of Police from the Namaka Police Station, Mr. Shiu Chand was the Guest Speaker at the event. Mr. Chand created awareness on kidnapping and slavery cases in Fiji.

Mr. Chand stated that human trafficking was not something that happened all of a sudden; it was a process.

“Human trafficking process is equal to Act+ Means+ Purpose. In the act phase, the trafficker organizes and facilitates the recruitment and movement of the victim from one place to the other. In the means phase, the trafficker uses threat, force and/or deception to recruit the victim. The purpose of human trafficking is the money or revenue or other benefits it brings to the traffickers,” he explained.

Mr. Chand stressed that ignorance was not the answer and people needed to look out for warning signs of slavery and human trafficking.

The warning signs that someone may be trapped in modern slavery include tattoos (sometimes traffickers mark their victims), sudden change in clothing, unexplained new possession of items, new relationships with someone of greater age difference, victims avoiding eye contact, untreated medical conditions such as cuts or bruises, unable to speak independently, person suddenly missing classes for no apparent reason as well as sudden fear of authorities.

Mr. Chand also highlighted that human trafficking is taken very seriously in Fiji. Anyone found guilty of human trafficking can be imprisoned for 12 years; for child trafficking the penalty is 25 years and for debt bondage it is 12months.

The theme of the event was on anti-slavery and will include peaceful, hopeful messages, artwork about survivors and traffickers to raise awareness about modern day slavery to the communities.

UniFiji will also further hold a debate with the debate statement “The Reality of Freedom- Fact or Fiction”.

Despite being a small University, UniFiji continue to focus on not only creating awareness to students, but also focusing on community and national building in various ways. The University is determined to produce work-ready and holistically developed students for the greater benefit of the nation.

About #MyFreedomDay

According to a CNN article, modern day slavery is hidden from sight and among its victims are at least 10 million children. To mark this day, schools and students all over the world could take part on March 14, 2018 to raise awareness on modern day slavery. The simple question asked this year is- “What does freedom mean to you?”