

December, 2015

Our Year of Feministing

*Reflections by Emerging Leaders' Forum 6
Fiji Women's Rights Movement
December, 2015*

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Fiji Women's Rights Movement's Note

The Emerging Leaders' Forum (ELF) is a year-long feminist training course for 18-25 year old women run by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) under our Young Women in Leadership Programme.

The training aims to develop young women's ability to critically analyse issues and develop advocacy skills through a series of issue based workshops and retreats.

Topics such as gender, feminism, human rights, trade, the economy, the environment, gender based violence, sexual reproductive health and rights and women's participation in decision making are discussed and analysed using a feminist and human rights based approach. To date there have been six cohorts of the ELF course.

Since its inception in 2003, ELF has had 84 young women who have graduated from the course. ELF graduates are made up of a cross-section of young women in Fiji including, young professionals, university students, single mums, young women living with disabilities, gay, bisexual and trans women and young women living in informal settlements. Graduates of the course join the ELF Alumni.

In the 12-year herstory of ELF, we have learnt that one of the key successes of the course is the ongoing support we strive to provide the graduates. This supports them to remain connected to each other and the broader feminist movement, which in turn empowers them to lead and/or participate in women's rights advocacy.

The ongoing support for young women's safe spaces, leadership and initiatives adds to the sustainability of FWRM and the wider Fiji women's movement through the thriving young women's group.

The graduates of ELF have formed a network of young women that advocates the concerns of young women in the personal and public spheres with several joining FWRM as fulltime staff members over the years.

Congratulations to the 21 young women graduating this year! It was wonderful getting to know each and every one of you and to see you grow. We look forward to seeing your active participation in the Alumni.

Thank you for sharing your stories, your year of feministing, with us.

Always remember:

***“You are undeniable,
you are capable,
indescribable, revolutionary
You are beautiful.”***

In solidarity,
Team FWRM

Aatika Patel

While the climate had changed,
I had changed more.
In re-examining my view of feminism,
I had to take the short trip with those who shared the same views,
At least same views over some things.
A change in opinion, new experiences,
With people (young women and trans women)
Representing my country.
Helping me bring out the message and meaning to other youths.
Reopening my mind, awakening a true passion for what's right.
It was all real.
Violence against women,
Climate change,
Sexual, reproductive and health rights,
Feminism within women's movement,
Human rights,
Women and the environment,
Gender power relations,
Let's talk about us,
Gender power relations.
Simply allowing me to be myself and speak my mind.
ELF helped me to be unafraid and take a second glance.
To the decisions I made or make.
To the opinions I carried...

Artika Singh

Before I even started the programme I was very interested about it as some of the ELFA's had told me about it and also encouraged me to be part of it. I experienced sheer delight when I found out that I had been selected.

Before I started I had some knowledge about feminism, gender, the LGBTIQ community, women in politics, gender and women, sexual reproductive health and rights and women's representation in media. Most of my knowledge was from my legal background so I had only known things from one perspective.

During the ELF 6 journey, I learnt a lot and can say that my knowledge regarding issues stated above is more enhanced. I now know that gender and sex are not the same things. There is more hardships related to the LGBTIQ community than limited legal access which I had known. I understand more about my own body in terms of my sexual reproductive health and rights. This session in particular was fascinating to me. I realised how little I knew about my own body. Something such as having Pap smear had not occurred to me before this session.

One of my other favourite retreats was where a very knowledgeable professional had come to our retreat to resolve the conflicts which had started occurring among the ELF 6 family. Through her sessions I was able to better understand myself and also others and their backgrounds. I particularly loved the activities which she had lined up for us. My favourite of it all was where we were blindfolded and our group members had to guide us through obstacles to collect lollies. This enhanced our team building skills. (By the way my team won :-P).

Another session which I really enjoyed and gained a lot from was women's representation in the media. Prior to this I personally didn't know the linkage that well. I was aware of the concept of male gaze however I didn't know that something as simple as casting female characters in more in TV series such as Crime Scene Investigation would increase more female

students in science classes. It all went and linked to the concept of seeing it and believing that one could achieve the same. The video which showed the lives of six influential women leaders from Papua New Guinea, was very interesting. It encouraged and inspired to reflect that we too can bring about change in our communities using own capacities.

All in all I loved the ELF 6 journey. I have made new friends, gained more knowledge and believe that I am now equipped to make changes in my community as well.

Artika is a simple girl who comes from a small family in Nausori. She attended Saraswati Primary and later completed her high school education at Rishikul Sanatan College. She then pursued her Bachelor of Laws and Professional Diploma in Legal Practice from University of the South Pacific. She recently got admitted to the Bar and is a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of Fiji. She has always been interested in women's rights. As part of her undergraduate studies she undertook the unit Gender and the Law which paved her pathway to learning about gender, feminism and the inequalities women face day to day. She has also been part of the Fiji Young Women's Forum. In relation to her family, she is the youngest and has always been encouraged to voice her opinion, make decisions for herself and be part of movements which bring about changes in the community.

Chandra Nair Fisi'iahi

Where to begin? Let's start from the very beginning of this year where Delailah's mother meets the ELFs, the ELF 6 warriors.

Not knowing anyone was kind of scary at first but when we all started to introduce ourselves in a circle, that's when the journey began. We all had this one word in common and that was FEMINIST - we all believed in equal rights for all gender.

Delailah's mother made new friends, all so very different in their own beautiful way. As her journey continued, she learned so many new things and relearned the old. She learned deeper on feminism and how it all started; she learned about the parliament; the LGBTQI community; she learned about lobbying and advocating; she loved having to learn about SRHR from a doctor who is the best at his work; she also loved it because by that time she was six months pregnant. She also got to learn how beautifully one can use their talent to advocate on FEMINISM but best of all, she loved learning new words.

Delialah's mother now understands how to work with a group of young women, all so multi-boned and multi-ethnic. She also now knows how to work under pressure but she still has work to do with time management. The best parts of this journey was being part of the feminist movement and doing all kinds of advocating. Marching to Reclaim the Night; dancing to the One Billion Rising song in MHCC while feeding off the crowds hype to continue the dance four times; travelling all the way to Nadi just to be part of the Virgin Monologues; plus doing so many other actives to advocate for what she believes in with the young women warriors of ELF 6.

The sad part is that she can't pick her best memory of this year because her whole year was so wonderfully amazingly awesome with young women who inspired each other to keep fighting; with young women who did so much of advocating; and yes young women including Delialah's mother who achieved so much this year. So having being part of the Emerging Leaders Forum 6 was the best memory of this year.

Delialah's mother one of the ELF 6 warriors who ends her year feeling empowered; feeling more inspired, so encouraged to take a step in changing the way the world perceives a woman's strength.

Chandra is presently studying accounting at the Fiji National University. She is a proud mummy to 11-week old Delialah Aurora Anthony, who loves being carried around. She married Delialah's father on the day of her birthday because Delialah's father thought it'll be nice and "romantic". She loves to read all kinds of books and loves to meet all kinds of people and dreams of one day going to different places to swim, hike, eat and make a lot of memories. Chandra loves baking but dislikes cooking. What she loves most is her Ted Talk videos and old songs; yes she's got an old soul trapped in her. Talking about Ted Talk videos, that is where Chandra was inspired to voice out her opinions, so she became a feminist and this is her year of feministing.

Elizabeth Aisea

The year 2015 has been by far a year of learning for me. Not only academically but from others around me. Learning about myself, learning from past experiences and mistakes and learning so much from the Emerging Leaders Forum (ELF) programme that I have had the honour and privilege to be a part of. It has been a year of self-discovery. Before I joined the ELF 6 programme, I had very little understanding about feminism and what it was all about. I did not clearly understand the significance it had on me as a young woman. My year of feministing has been the best experience ever. Without this experience I would still be unaware how important feminism is and that it is not a negative thing that society has stereotyped it to be.

I have learnt what it means to be a feminist, I have learnt to have an open mind, and I have learnt to have a voice and to be strong. I have learnt to stand up for what I believe in, to stand up for others and not to be undermined by others. I am glad to say that I am one of the luckiest persons I know because ELF has taught me all these. I have enjoyed this journey and will definitely continue in this amazing movement.

This experience is definitively one for the books because I have had the opportunity to meet such an amazing team of young women; not only are they inspiring but an incredible group of young women that I now call my sisters. I am indeed blessed and grateful to FWRM for this opportunity and to the amazing Young Women's Officer, Mamta for her patience and support.

Elizabeth loves travelling and is a foodie. She is currently enrolled in a Bachelor in Physiotherapy course at the Fiji School of Medicine. When she is not studying, she loves going to the gym, being with her family and advocating for issues affecting women. She is a FEMINIST.

Vilimone Tuinavolivi aka Felomeena

Aloha! Bula Vinaka! My name is Vilimone aka Felomeena. I am transgender and still going through transitioning.

Who am I?

- Movie freak
- First trans to model for Fiji Fashion Week 2013
- Second eldest in the family
- Love swimming
- Meeting people and socialising
- Big eater – I love food!
- Participant at the Fiji Young Women's Forum 2014 (my first time)
- Advocate for climate change during Adi Senikau Pageant 2014
- Participant at the Fiji National Youth Council Youth Forum

My experience with the ELF programme has been an extreme journey. It has been a full realization not only as a transgender but as a human. Feminism has made me appreciate the fact there is still hope that people such as myself can continue to uphold ambition to continue to support empowerment of women.

My best experience on my ELF journey was being close to my sisters during workshop and retreats. The bond, laughter and crazy moments and not forgetting the food and resorts. LOL! ELF has really changed my perspective on everyday life.

Feminism is more than a movement. It is an understanding of your past, present and future. It is an embodiment and realization of self.

Gorgia Jemima Lilo

If I'm being honest, I've had a not so great year. My year was filled with lots and lots of disappointment from a lot of people around me. I well and truly had some of the lowest points of my life this year, BUT I also happened to have some of the highest. I hate to say this but this experience actually got me to open up at one point. Like I actually shared what I really felt with other people -tears, mucus and all.

I met a group that is made up of some of the funniest, strangest, weirdest, most beautiful, most FANTASTICAL women creatures in the world and they made me feel loved when I needed to feel it most. We had our ups and downs (lots and lots of downs) but eventually we worked through it to become stronger people.

The Emerging Leaders' Forum (ELF) was a truly amazing and humbling experience. The entire year was spent constantly learning and striving to be better women. I learnt things about myself and about the women around that truly surprised me.

As with anything, cliques in the group were formed and I ended up with two very super special humans that I'm pretty sure are going to be lifelong friends. They're my weird soulmates and we've bonded best on the dance floors of various clubs and at the bottoms of jugs of rum and cola. They both have so much to give the world and I'm really, really glad I'm going to get to see them change the world.

I also got super close to this crazy, punny (yes PUN-NY), fantastical human being who gets me on whole other levels. And we've bonded best over our strange sexual banter (and regular banter), her constant supply of wonker candy and tick tacks, her sometimes horrible yet always hilarious puns and her talking about her cat (that is obviously one the smartest cats alive).

I could go on about how I've bonded with each of the extra special human beings that I've had the absolute most profound pleasure of spending the

year with and calling my feminist sisters but then this would turn into a 800 page novel and we don't want that now do we?

So I will end by saying this, the ELF 6 taught me how to be a feminist. It taught me how to be a friend. It taught me how to be a better person and it taught me how to be a leader. Graduating from my year of feministing is throwing me into the world ready to kick some serious ass.

Karalaini Lilian Seru

Honestly, I would not change 2015 for last year or for any other year. This year has been the most memorable, heartbreaking, challenging and awarding year for me. Being part of the Emerging Leaders' Forum (ELF) programme has taught me to be the kind of woman I want to become and that is to be confident of who I am, stern in every decisions I make and courageous to stand my ground and fight for women who do not have a voice. I smile now every time I think of my ELF 6 journey because for the past eleven months ELF was both fun and challenging. I am eternally grateful that I got to experience this journey with intelligent, diverse and strong young women who are the epitome of solidarity, acceptance and love.

ELF was a great learning curve for me on topics that ranged from feminism to climate change to human rights to women rights to SRHR to the LGBTQI community to mental health to advocacy to gender power relations to women's representation in mass media and more importantly talking about us as different individuals. This program has taught me a lot. It has equipped me with armors of a bold and independent feminist and it has instilled in me that I can be different, that different is ok and that different is uniquely beautiful.

My most memorable moment of my ELF 6 journey was the last retreat at Warwick Resort. A feeling of sadness had clouded me during the two days as it felt like I was losing a part of me. Throughout this year, I have come to know this incredible young women in different spectrums and for this I am grateful because I got to learn that not two person are the same even if we share the same commonalities and that there are bound to be differences but it is how we come out of this differences that matters. Hence, I would love say that "We came, we fought and we conquered!"

My identity has evolved greatly during my ELF journey as I am able to be fully aware of myself and accept the person I have become. I am proud to identify myself as a feminist. To claim that being a woman is not just about

beauty and weakness but it's about passion, strength and perseverance. That I am who I am and that is a sister, a daughter, a friend, an aunt, a Christian, that I am emotional, compassionate, loyal, tenacious, an entrepreneur, an interior designer, a problem solver, an introvert, I am a voice but more importantly I am a "Woman". Feminism for me is a leveled playing field between a man and woman irrespective of age, gender identity and color. Feminism is about respecting women, it is about giving us the respect and the rights we deserve. Feminism today is not just about women alone, it is against war, terrorism, poverty, murder, injustice, corruption, climate change because within the helms of all this women and children are the greatly affected. This is why we need feminism because feminism is equality for all.

My transformation whilst being part of ELF has shown me the kind of woman I have become, the kind of women I need to surround myself with and the kind of women I need to raise. Last but certainly not the least, our solidarity during our ELF journey was tested but I am appreciative that we accepted our differences, our diversities and that we were able to still hold hands and fight for what we believe in. Therefore, I am forever thankful to be given this opportunity to be part of ELF 6 because it is where I got to learn, share and welcome from this extraordinary young women the different adventures of being a woman and being a feminist.

Kashmita Rao

The Emerging Leaders' Forum (ELF) for me has been such an eye-opener. Growing up in a traditional South Indian family, I was always curious about how I could learn or exchange ideas with other like-minded women but I was always too nervous or intimidated to try. Our family believes in hard work but an almost backward idea of women's rights. I vowed to break that mindset and I did that when I started at my first job as a creative designer. My passion for creativity, art and individuality helped me become a senior visual designer and without knowing it, I had created my own destiny and secured my career and future by teaching myself a skill through determination and self-belief.

In this year long program, I have learnt about laws and issues, feminism within the women's movement and women's participation in decision making in our community, LGBTQI movement, women's representation in mass Media, SRHR, gender power relations that I previously thought I had no business knowing about. Through ELF I now know that I have a voice that can be heard and that for too long so many issues have been swept under the carpet because of a traditional mindset. I am continuously learning more about the laws in place in our country and globally about women's rights and human rights so I can share this with other young girls in my community. ELF has truly helped me discover more about myself. I have found a strong powerful woman that has been within me all this time that has been awoken by this forum. Knowledge is power and I intend to use everything that I learn to better myself and the community I live in.

Fiji Women's Rights Movement – ELF 2015 also strengthens solidarity and friendship by fostering leadership in young women like us to advocate for positive change in women. A diverse range of religious, ethnic & professional groups which is creating a ripple effect within the communities by talking to our friends and family members about various sessions and using the knowledge and empowerment we gain in our personal and professional lives. Aside from being an excellent program, this forum has helped me to better understand the community that I live in, the role that I play within the community and how I can contribute to the community. This also complements my professional career.

I have always strived to take a leadership role within the family and my career but have always shied away from it owing to the fact that I wanted to be an effective leader. Passion for growth, and leadership helped me understand and draw strength from my rights as a woman.

It was a privilege to be part of a solidarity movement and I will continue to advocate other young women about this program.

Thank you very much FWRM!

Kashmita Rao is passionate with creating things and even more making things better. She's been in the business of creativity since she hung her first painting on the fridge when she was 11. Her interests however, extend beyond the design world, which includes actively supporting women and human right, advocating issues of social justice and gender power. She loves reading about Greek mythology & philosophy.

Follow her on:

Twitter : @KashmitaRao
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Khaleila Vakatalai

This year began with a lot of expectations and of course, it included deepening my understanding and knowledge of feminism.

I came into the program with three years' experience of working with rural women in sharing their experiences through community radio, therefore feminism was not entirely a new topic of discussion for me. My goal was to learn as much as I could so that I'd be more productive and effective in my work and passion of helping others. I was also looking forward to networking with other young women, who like me, had the same passion/belief in women's rights and changing the status-quo!

What I didn't expect was the rough road to self-discovery, authentic solidarity and sisterhood within the young emerging leaders! Countless memories flood through my mind and tears still swell up in my eyes as I try to put into words the greatness of our journey together and individually.

We were so focused on learning about the different aspects of women's rights, the issues, solutions etc. that we failed to first learn more about each other, and in a room full of diverse young women with strong personalities, and it was explosive!

I can never thank FWRM and especially the Young Women's Officer enough for altering the sessions and inserting "*Let's Talk about Us*" into the program and weekend retreat!

This temporarily took our attention away from the global issues of women and put a magnifying glass into our own personal issues - who we were, where we came from, and what we were struggling with. That for me, was the moment of truth. I discovered that deep down, I was my own problem, my own barrier and my biggest critic. That was also the moment I decided that that was ENOUGH! I was only going to accept constructive criticism from others and I was only going to be positive about life, and if I failed then I would look into my mirror that reads:

“YOU ARE ABLE”.

“YOU ARE ENOUGH”.

“GOD IS WITH YOU”.

There are so many memorable moments that I will forever treasure but this is the one I'd highlight because it was truly the turning point for ELF 6 and self-discovery of individuals played a big part in sharing with the whole group, who we were, where we came from, why we were there and what we were struggling with.

I learnt so much about feminism and the women's movement, the learning environment couldn't have been better. I seriously can't believe one year has gone by so fast and I would go back in time just to experience the whole journey again! I entered with the goal of learning more about helping others and I came out more refreshed and energised with renewed passion because I learned about myself too!

She was a strong-minded young woman who loved life, music, travelling and because she had a heart for laughter and radical minds, she always found herself among all kinds of people, learning all sorts of interesting things! However, at times her patience with people's stupidity and ignorance would capture her own attention even more than the green (her favourite colour) someone would be wearing. Her passion is working with people at community level and she loves nature, thus believes that her current occupation at management level and sustainable development at the eco-resort was God-given.

She is more powerful now that she has discovered her weakness and decided that it will not hold her back anymore! She is rising and she will conquer!

Maryann Lockington

Letter to an Emerging Leader inspired by Phyllis Chesler's
Letter to a Young Feminist

I'm sitting at the keyboard trying to align my thoughts which have been in disarray for the past couple of days. How do I condense almost eleven months of enlightenment and learning into 500 words? How do I talk about the different phases of awareness that I underwent during the one-year program that was the Emerging Leaders Forum? I guess I should begin my reflection from the first day, walking into the Salvation Army hall like a plain white t-shirt being thrown in with bright coloured garments in a washing machine.

I walked in on the first day thinking, we would have a room full of diverse young women who were going to create their own little form of revolution. I thought, finally, I could be part of a team of like-minded people who were passionate about human rights issues and the rule of law. Obviously, we would agree on the issues we faced and how to solve them because we were after all, young women facing the same issues. By the third month I realised how dreadfully wrong I was to even think that being women meant anything near an identical perspective. Instead, I was met with a mix of combustible strength that hadn't been taught to merge in order to create that indestructible unit we were all yearning for.

I'm getting ahead of myself here. Let me first highlight that I have been very fortunate to be able to work with and be inspired by these young women who have become my sisters. There are too many of us for me to write about individually (I really wish I could) but collectively, we brought together a wide range of different experiences and skills. We were involved with the One Billion Rising movement and the My Revolution monologue. I participated in the IDAHOT unplugged event. After the tragedy of Cyclone PAM, ELF 6 mobilized to start a #DonateAPad campaign for the affected women in Vanuatu. I participated in commemorating International Women's Day at the GIRLS fun day, with ELF 6 launching an online

campaign to share images of inspirational women. I took part in the West Papua marches. ELF 6 came together to organise a mid-year event themed “Rise of the Feminist Phoenix”, where we showcased our activities and achievements to our family and friends. We are now mobilizing for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence. We have done so much and learnt so much with ELF 6. It was an amazing experience and I am grateful to those that have been part of it.

First, I shall introduce the key factors of this wonderful yet challenging journey (the challenge only adding to the positive growth this programme had instilled.)

FWRM being the most prominent example throughout the program of the effectiveness, passion and success behind the feminist movement and history in the country, we were quite fortunate to not only be accepted into ELF but work with few of their staff, former staff and colleagues. The two people that were most instrumental in the different sessions were our two coordinators, with Veena taking us through the first half of the year before Mamta stepped into the role for the rest of the year.

Veena guided us with a reservoir of unrelenting tolerance and patience with our sometimes flighty behavior. With a room full of eager-to-please and eager-to-change-the-world sparkly eyed young women whose ideas and strategies could sometimes stray towards the impractical, Veena was the firm reminder that steered us towards keeping a goal in mind. Veena inspired me especially with her form of poetry and encouraged me to channel my love for the art into an instrument of advocacy and awareness. She set up a timeline activity explaining the history of feminism in Fiji and while admittedly some of the dates have escaped me (regrettably numbers and I don't necessarily get along), a new clarity dawned on me about the reality of women now and the long continuing journey that led up to it. In the same way, FWCC's Shamima Ali during her session on EVAW was the drop of sobriety on the history of women human rights defenders in Fiji and the role of FWRM and FWCC.

It was as if I was in a passageway between two doors and the one behind me had become unscrewed and dropped to the floor to reveal a line of

different women who had come before me carrying the same torch. It was the torch that burned with the radical idea of justice and equality. I say radical because in the 21st century, the idea of women's equality and potential in leadership is still undermined by the deep-rooted institution of patriarchy. The second door, the one in front of me was unlocked but only partially open because while I wanted to continue what those before me had started, I needed the skills and knowledge to do so. That was where ELF came in.

Our second coordinator (second not meaning less or more than first) was Mamta, a ball of energy that kept things rolling and kept discussions going. Mamta was as encouraging and inspirational as she was a no-nonsense leader. Her organisational methods were no bore as she taught us to build a structure within our teams based on our different strengths. There were many things I appreciated in Mamta's style of facilitation but mainly, I was grateful that she was always accessible and accommodating to our needs (some bringing aching head pains, surely). Her approach was slightly different to Veena and I secretly entertain the idea that ELF 6 was so special that our potential for greatness needed two coordinators.

In the same way, I appreciated the different women that graced our sessions each month, like DIVA's Noelene and Shirley who taught me that having different interests and paths didn't necessarily mean I was unfocused but merely reconciling my own social identities.

There was also Roshika, an unwavering force of passion and conviction in her fight for equality. Roshika pushed us to turn our ideas into a solid form of activism and to understand the way patriarchy works, as well as the power dynamics that result from it.

FWRM's Tara simplified and livened up what could have otherwise been a boring session on legislation and parliament (to which I'm accustomed to at university). Instead we had a series of lively discussions on our realities as young women, indigenous women, gay women, trans women and how being visible and active in decision making levels could change some of the negative realities. Tara also helped us relate to the roles and existing

international law and national law, using local examples (like the family law) on how to lobby and bring about change.

Asinate and ELFA's Rosie were instrumental in our team-building and helping us realise the importance of mental health. Ala and Lillian, amazing, inspirational and cheerful individuals whose sessions were lively and enjoyable.

Shazia Usman, whose session I closely related to as someone studying media and hoping to utilise it for advocacy and storytelling. Not forgetting of course easy-going Kris, whose immeasurable support throughout the year and encouragement to disseminate was heavily appreciated. During his session on LGBTQI, Kris welcomed our conversation without dominating the space even though he was more of an expert in the field than any of us. I'm also grateful that I could tap his list of contacts and network for my stories.

There was also Michelle, who, as busy as her schedule was, stepped in to guide us when we as Mamta put it, "lost the plot". ELFA's support throughout the journey has been amazing and I sincerely hope that they're as eager to embrace us after graduation as we are in being part of a powerful group of women.

So here I am, in my passage way still holding my torch and ready to open that door in front of me. The journey has been and would probably continue to be difficult but definitely worth it. I have refrained from saying much about my ELF 6 sisters because there is so many of us and I cannot write about them all (though I sorely wish I could). However, I will say that I have been blessed to work with and know strong, brilliant, amazing, crazy and inspirational young women in ELF 6. I have taken away with me strong bonds of friendship and have created an amazing network. At the end of the day, we became that great unit we had been striving tirelessly to achieve throughout this year. We brought to the table different experiences, knowledge and skills and while it took us some time, we learnt to use it in a way that would better the women's movement, the climate justice movement, the West Papua movement and any future undertakings to challenge patriarchy and injustice.

The Emerging Leaders Forum opened the door for my future journey and my torch burns much brighter. Like I had hoped, ELF gave me something to help me move forward but most importantly reminded me that I wasn't taking this journey alone. There were 28 other young women beside me and we were on different paths but we all carried the torch.

Here's to breaking barriers, bringing change and achieving equality.

Monica Aguilar

Life is like a poem. You have to look back, think and reflect. Words can't sometimes express how you really feel. Sometimes, it's like I can't find the right words to describe an experience.

As I look back to the memories that I have created with my ELF 6 sisters, it feels like watching a silent black and white movie. The screen would be bright and colourful as we live the moment. But once it's time for us to retreat back into our cocoons, the scene turns into a black and white silent movie. There are no words that can describe the emotions, the feelings and the experiences we've shared in each meeting and retreat. A page wouldn't be enough to tell how much fun and how much we've grown through this programme. Each and every young woman had a story to tell. We were all different from each other. No one was the same as the other. It was like a mix of different ingredients that resulted into a beautiful delicious cake.

When I entered the conference room where our first ELF meeting was held, I told myself that everything would be alright. I was a shy person who only confined myself within the walls of my own social networks. I could never look at a person's eyes and talk to them nor could I find the strength to start a conversation with anyone. As the day progressed, I felt insecure and left out because I was super shy. I thought to myself that this is a waste of time and I should spend my time studying rather than meeting people I didn't know. However, when we had our first retreat at the Pearl Resort, I couldn't stop asking myself, *"How can someone like me be so fortunate to be with these young, fun, vibrant and intelligent women?"* Everyone started to develop their own cliques and it felt like there was a diversion for a while. But we managed to set out our differences and that was the best thing that has ever happened.

Crying on each other's shoulders, wiping each other's tears, cracking jokes to make the others laugh and sharing our personal experiences to make each other feel better. That's how we became a family. Thankfully I became super-duper close to two gorgeous ladies who are now my homies,

my comedians and my motivation. We grew closer to each other and many of us developed a “sisterhood” amongst each other.

Before, I would always fill my head with negativity and I had a really low self-esteem. I never imaged reaching heights where ELF 6 has introduced me to. Being a part of ELF has helped me discover the person I have always wanted to be and meet. The power of being a part of ELF 6 has brought so much light into my life. I used to pretend to be someone I wasn't so that people would like me. But now, I have realised that I shouldn't focus on pleasing everyone around me. Instead, I should learn to love myself because only then will people learn to love me too.

I've learnt to embrace my flaws, my craziness and everything that makes me “Monica”.

If it wasn't for the information that was shared along the way, then I wouldn't have gained so much knowledge, experience and confidence.

Each meeting and retreat had a story to tell. The lessons that were advocated in each meeting and retreat filled my naïve brain with so much golden knowledge.

Because of ELF, I am a new person.

A better one.

Because of ELF, I've learnt to turn my weaknesses into strengths.

Because of ELF, I became a part of another gorgeous family.

Because of ELF, I can be who I want to be.

Of Filipino ancestry, Monica was born and raised in Fiji and 18-years-old when she joined ELF 6. She volunteers with the community radio broadcaster for FemLink Pacific; is a teacher assistant at the Little Champs Kindergarten and a Prospecting Agent for Harcourts Real Estate. She is pursuing an undergraduate degree in law and journalism as a second year student. In the future, she intends to work for UN Women. She spent her high school years at Saint Joseph's Secondary School.

Monisha Singh

Growing up I saw and felt symbols of inequality in my community either through discrimination by ethnicity, gender, age or socio economic status of people. These experiences that I shared with some others made me want to be that change, to be that integrated person whose ideas would spread to others. This belief led me to study the fields of psychology and sociology and later join community welfare.

Joining ELF 6 was for my self-development and my own identification as a feminist. I wished to meet women of similar age and share my opinions with them on issues in society that we each held important. Aside from this interest to learn and acquire further knowledge on social concerns, I felt a need to spend more time in an environment that enabled me to understand my inner likes, dislikes and strengths.

From the first meeting to the last retreat, from learning concepts of gender roles, gender equality, equity and mainstreaming to complex topics like women's role in climate change and decision making, women's representation in the media and women's sexual and reproductive health concerns, I have indeed learnt a great deal. My understanding of the many issues pertaining women including the LGBTIQ community has developed and I feel much more confident in my capacity as a community worker. ELF has assisted me immensely in further developing my critical thinking.

The FWRM team offered an amazing learning environment and has also allowed us young women to unite and strengthen as a team of innovation and creativity. I feel closely knit with some of the Elfies and can count on them for support. As young women we have often sat down after our sessions and continued discussions, reaching common ground and plans for a huge number of activities to get our ideas across. This, I feel is leadership within solidarity that the FWRM team has gradually assisted us to achieve.

Some moments shared during the five meetings and retreats alongside our extra collaborative activities are worth keeping and cherishing. For instance, our Show and Tell function that really brought out our strength as a team despite some hiccups. This ELF 6 presentation has taught me that

we do not need to be great to start, in fact we have become great as we started with this effort. Another memory worth highlighting is the little self-reflection activities we have had in the different sessions where I felt I was able to better understand my fellow Elfies and their perspectives on topics discussed. The most fun filled experiences shared were during the retreats when we got more time to just mingle with one another in relaxing environments.

I am grateful to FWRM for this opportunity and wish to continue working with my fellow feminist folks. I am glad to have formed a network with the FWRM team as I feel I can work in collaboration with the team as I deliver my services as a welfare officer in the area of child protection.

Monisha is a Cancerian and spends most of her time at work as a child and family welfare officer – a position she has held for two years. In this role, she continues to assist those disadvantaged and in need, to access equal services and justice.

Aside from her professional role, she spends time acquiring new skills and strengthening those she already possess because she believes in being that perfectly sharp Swiss knife. Her love and value for her family keeps her strong and focused.

She is a feminist at home, in her own circle and her professional life.

Nandni Vandhana

My ELF journey this year has been a highlight of my 24 years of existence.

There are things that happen in life which one is grateful about. I am grateful for my family, friends, work colleagues, neighbours, the market vendors and many more. These are people who affect my life in a way which brings out the best and bad; mostly a learning experience. Such has been my ELF journey - this opportunity gave me a sense of belonging, one which was filled with learning experiences.

“I am a FEMINIST”. This has come as a transformation, although I used to be involved in the civil society advocating for women’s equal rights, I never had the chance to be involved the way I was through the Forum. It was a refreshingly new environment and the urge to advocate for gender justice, human rights, democracy and so much more.

My highlight was the people; the other young women, the coordinators and facilitators, and the many people I have come to meet along the way.

The stories of these people have inspired me; have made me feel/experience different people in different communities. In particular, the young women that I shared the journey with have been such strong, passionate individuals who believe in their voice to make a difference in the lives of other people.

As a group, we have had our fair share of triumphs and defeats but we remained sustainable, the making of future leaders in whichever aspect of life, we have agreed to disagree and the bond shared over the year in one which will remain close to the heart always. I have now come to appreciate the value of solidarity amongst the group.

I have broadened my knowledge and understanding of women’s equal rights, the injustices and I believe in myself, as a feminist, that I need to and I will stand up for these things at home, at school, at the workplace, with my peers, in church and all the different spheres of life that I will be involved in.

My most memorable moment would be the last day of our final retreat when we were asked to write down things which were bringing us down in life; which was detrimental to our lives in one way or the other. This was an emotional time and as a group we tore the papers into pieces later and threw it in the water as a sign of letting go of all the negativity that was surrounding our lives. We then wrote a “word” on another paper which was empowering for us - I keep my word at my desk space at work. This was just an example of the journey of ELF that I appreciated; personal development into being strong advocates in the work of feminism.

This journey has been amazing and a reflective one personally which has now enabled me to make strong decisions about myself without doubting my ability.

Nandni enjoys and loves travelling to places that hold childhood memories; this reminds her in a way to be connected to the places, the people and the memories. She is passionate about writing and photography and most of it includes surroundings and things which strike the heart twice. She supports the work of feminism in the country and tries her best to involve herself as much as possible. Through this, you would sometimes find her performing spoken word for events, and something she is keen on doing regularly. If she is not doing the above, she enjoys time with family and loved ones. She sees herself working in the civil society in the future.

Neha Lal

After completing my degree in 2013, I was going through *The Fiji Times* to look for suitable vacancies when I came across FWRM's advertisement on the Emerging Leaders Forum. I wasn't aware of what it actually meant but the word leader caught my attention since always I had been working towards enhancing my leadership qualities. I dropped in my application not keeping any high hopes that I would get selected but was fortunate that I made it into the training.

The first day of the meet was very interesting as I looked forward to see who all were part of it; I wanted to meet the FWRM staff as I used to hear about the organisation's work. I got an opportunity to meet them and learn more about their work and how they do it. It was interesting how the very first meet all the members got comfortable with each other together with the staff who were associated with the programme; and from there started looking forward the meeting to see what the programme had for us.

One of my friends used to call me a feminist whenever I talked about women's right and the stand we should take, not bow in front of men; and the list goes on yet every time she said that I used to wonder what that meant. I did Google to see what it meant but only got to learn the true meaning of feminist through ELF. It made me realize that despite not knowing the meaning of feminism or what being feminist meant, I had always been one. I felt proud of myself that what people had been advocating and lobbying about under an organisation, I had been doing that over years. Therefore, being part of such an organisation was a bonus to enhance my knowledge and contribute towards the work being done.

The programme consisted of a wide range of topics which broadened my knowledge and understanding on important issues faced by people regionally and internationally. Some of the topics which were outlined in our programme were:

- Feminism
- Human Rights and Women's Rights

- LGBTQI
- Women and the Environment
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- Mental Health
- Let's Make Some Noise (lobbying, advocacy and activism)
- Let's Talk About Us
- Gender Power Relation
- 16 Days of Activism
- Women's Representation in Mass Media

There were a number of memorable moments since each time we met there was something new and interesting - having new born babies during our programme was a blessing. It was not only a programme where we were learning to be good leaders but it became like a family where we all cared for each other and were there for each other which was sign of solidarity. Despite the ups and downs, like it happens in all families, we managed to pull this off as a successful year for Emerging Leaders Forum 6.

The solidarity enabled us to share our feelings, emotions and share our deepest secrets with each other. The programme helped people to overcome their fear and stand for what was right.

Neha is diplomatic, graceful, peaceful and idealistic kind of person. A very independent person, who has been working for the last four years to pay for her own expenses. She has successfully completed her degree double majoring in History and Politics. Her passion to bring about change in the community encourages her in pursuing such a career. She aims to stand for election one day. Currently, she is undertaking postgraduate in Social Policy and Administration. She usually hides her feelings in order to bring peace around but by doing so, does not realise her true feelings since she is busy trying to keep others happy for which people end up taking advantage. All she is after is love and does unconscious attempts in finding the missing peace that completes her. She always tries to put herself in others shoes to see things through another person's point of view to make things right,

have a balance and harmony in life. She has suffered a lot in her early age and there understands people who have suffered in their life and aims to help them in any way possible. She spends her earnings in helping others and makes an effort to keep everyone happy so no one else has to go through what she went through. This strong will and motivation has kept on moving her to achieve greater heights despite the hurdles she has faced. She never lets her past hinder or affect her success. Hence, she is very creative, artistic and has a wide range of interests and hobbies through which she keeps herself busy.

Nigita Bharti

The Emerging Leaders' Forum has been one the most interesting and empowering experience for me and one which I will embrace at every step of my life - the learning of enlightening issues helped me understand and expand knowledge of daily issues/concern faced by individuals in Fiji and around the globe.

When I joined ELF 6 my intention was to boost my self-confidence and self-esteem to come out as a strong leader. In every session I learned things, and thought about things, that were harsh and upsetting but also an eye-opener. I have come to realise that addressing women's issues and gender issues means working to uproot entrenched practices and beliefs that have defined our societies for too long.

Feminism now for me is creating a world where each and every person, regardless of their gender, can reach their full potential without encountering the limitations of discrimination and other forms of downgrading. Feminism has liberated me enough to think compassionately and intersectionally. Intersectionality is a hugely important concept that I learned from ELF, and it helped me to understand the experiences of others in my community and beyond it.

The bonding with other ELF members helped me understand other things more deeply, as they were always coming up with questions and sharing their views and personal experience. The facilitators and the Young Women's Officer were so approachable that it was so easy to liaise and clarify doubts. The following sessions really touched me as I had no idea about these but now I'm. I intend to keep learning more about:

- Human's Rights, Women's Right and the LGBTQI Movement
- Women and the Environment
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- Mental Health
- Gender Power Relation
- Women's Representation in the Mass Media

I promise to take these values and teachings with me wherever I go and to not give into situations.

Nigita has always worked hard for studies and family. There is immense love and care for everyone in her heart. She is always keen to provide assistance and advocate on social issues, but she didn't have enough knowledge to support her views. She uses dance to depict her happiness, sadness and in creating awareness. She is always eager and happy to learn and expand knowledge; she follows empowering people on social media and in real life to learn from them and to help make a difference. She is full of life, laughter and loves spreading smile.

Salanieta Buli Cavuka

My ELF 6 journey began with doubts and self-consciousness. I was scared of being left out and not knowing what to do when we all get together during our workshops. However, as time went on I think I not only made friends but lifelong sisters who share and feel similar experiences, views, ideas and jokes together.

I learnt many things about myself as an individual, as a daughter, a mother, a wife and a colleague. I learnt what my human rights are; my sexual and reproductive health and rights are; and the relationship between Power, Gender and Feminism.

Throughout the year, ELF provided an environment where I could be myself and also include my baby girl when I needed to so because I was breastfeeding. I could take her during the retreats where I attended the workshop in the day and breastfeed her when we had our breaks. It was a great experience. I could say what's in my head without being teased and share my past experiences without the fear of being rejected or looked down upon. After any workshop I had attended, I would then share what I learnt with my partner and surprisingly, he found it interesting and urged me to keep attending these sessions and to share what I learnt, with him.

The most memorable moments I experienced with ELF 6 was when we had our discussions (and this is no normal kind of discussion) but with background music and laughter, with many different and powerful ideas just coming and flooding the room we would be in. I guess I always treasure those moments because when I go back to my daughter and partner I feel like superwoman (ha!) and my partner would be dying to know what was discussed in the sessions. But as the year is ending I plan to continue and empower my children, my family and the people around me on what I had learnt as well as experienced throughout this journey.

Salanieta is 22-years-old and expecting her second child in January 2016. She comes from a family of seven with mum and dad, two elder sisters and

two younger brothers. Witnessing her dad's abusive behaviour towards her mum is what drove her to join ELF 6. It was her brother in-law who showed her FWRM's ELF expression of interest call on Facebook.

She joined to learn more about advocacy on violence against women and what she learned surpassed her expectations.

She loves butterflies - anything glittery and shiny; Disney and Barbie cartoons; anime and Harry Potter. People find her sociable and she likes to learn more about others and their interests. She dreams to create a world where her daughters can grow up and create their own "herstory" as strong and empowered women.

Sheena Lal

Applying to become part of ELF 6 this year was not an abrupt decision on my part. I have friends who are part of the ELF Alumni and they have talked about what they do within the group and how they have a network of like-minded people who are strong and capable women. This on its own intrigued me and upon the first ELF 6 session I was surrounded by a diverse looking group of young women.

As the months passed by I got to know these young women who also had a diverse manner of thinking and yet all of them, including me, had one thing in common: to work to make a change for the better within our communities and within our country for women and children.

As a group, ELF 6 had its ups and downs however, everyone got along well enough and during the sessions and retreats we all worked well within our smaller (allocated or otherwise) groups. Within the year we learnt about each other's lives and what drives each of us into doing what we do or brings us to participate in advocating and/or volunteering for various causes.

The day long sessions were interesting and very informative especially the one with DIVA. Their session on "Women and the Environment" opened me to a new perspective of looking at things. Their economical point of view was something that made me realise that my manner of looking at things has been minimised to my psychology background. The first retreat on Humans Rights; Women's Rights and the LGBTQI Movement along with Retreat 2 on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, would be one of the best retreats for me as those topics are very personal to me. I would have however liked more time spent on LGBTQI issues holistically. Those two retreats were well coordinated and allowed us to openly ask whatever we felt like and the facilitators answered our queries without making us feel foolish or make us think our questions were invalid.

The previous coordinator of ELF 6, Veena Singh, was friendly and made the first session quite comfortable as did Mamta Chand when she came in as the new coordinator.

The best part of being in ELF 6, I'd have to say is being in a group with strong-willed, passionate and intellectual young women with like-minded ideas with whom I can discuss about various topics and get a multitude of different responses. I would say that being around these fantastic ladies I have changed slightly, definitely slightly more sociable and more akin to slowing down and thinking from all directions instead of just confronting situations/problems/issues from a singular perspective.

Ashlyn, or Sheena, as she prefers to be called, is a bibliophile and loves nothing better than finding a good book and settling down with it and a nice cup of tea. She has a strong fondness for music in almost all genres as well as an intense love for anime, manga and gaming. Her free time is spent on mainly those activities or playing with her pets (six dogs and five cats), or if she is feeling social then hanging out with her friends. She is working as a Graduate Assistant with the Faculty of Arts, Law, and Education, in the School of Social Sciences (department of Psychology) at the University of the South Pacific. The field of psychology is a passion of hers as it opens her up to many different views, manners of thinking as well as theories that can be applied to everyday situations.

Simaima Bloomfield

ELF 6 went beyond my expectation. It was mind blowing, educational, eye opening and of course I would say, a life changer.

I have never regretted applying for the training. In the beginning, it was a little bit uncomfortable having different individuals coming together with different perspectives, characteristics, backgrounds and making everyone work together one way or the other. However, at the end, things fell into place and made sense as everyone pitched in and were very passionate about what we were all in for.

So now I am more open to talk about whatever the fuck I want to with whoever I want – meaning, I can speak my mind with confidence, continue to challenge the status quo and also to be the voice of those who cannot be heard.

I discovered that I was a feminist even before I was a part of ELF, but that I did not really know anything on the subject, let alone, know what the definition of feminism. So, I developed my knowledge whole lot while being part of ELF 6.

What did I learn? So much! Words are not enough to even describe it. However, one of the so many things that I learnt was that every human being has rights and this is vital to maintain peace and equality. Although it is sad to see that this is not what's happening. I also learnt that things within a society has to work together in order to make things stable...like one cannot just fight for women's equality and say nothing about climate change. All these things effects on one another and therefore, they must all be given attention.

Learning did not stop there though. I learnt the importance of voting and how you can push for certain things to get on the agenda of parliamentarians. I also learnt that people do not necessarily have to love each other in order to work with each other but rather, to get things done (hopefully for the better). In addition, just discovering who I am as a person and getting to know my sisters on a personal level. There are just too many

memorable moments so I would like to mention them all here: discovering that **asexual** people exist. I remember I couldn't get over it that day. **Reclaim the Night March**: the first time I have ever marched for something other than the opening of the parliament (in Tonga). This was for a good cause and people came out in numbers so this was a first. **Rise of the Feminist Phoenix**: was an excellent event executed by ELF 6 given that this was the first one ever. My sisters had amazing pieces to present and all the hard work invested into this event, paid off. Overall, this year with ELF - I would not have it any other way.

The things I learnt of this world; self-discovery; working with people; expanding my knowledge and thinking critically; the programme offered me so much more than what I had expected and so I will encourage future leaders to apply for it too. Thank you ELF!

Simaima or known to many as Maima, is nearly a quarter century old strong woman who is confident enough to say is a feminist. She loves her music especially listening to RnB and Soul as that's her escape from the "noisy world". A warm hearted human being, she lends a hand when she can, enjoys long and deep conversations. She also truly believes that Karma's a bitch. Currently studying economics, she is interested to find out the relationship between climate change and economic development in the Pacific region. When not attending classes, she watches a lot of crime scene investigation series and reads a lot of nonfiction.

Tamani Rarama

It didn't start with that one phone call from the then FWRM Young Women's Officer, Veena Singh, relaying to me the great news that I have been selected for the ELF 6. Nor, did my feministing start when I started uni.

My feministing started when I was growing up as a young transqueer. It was during this time of questioning myself in my adolescent years that I realised that there were so many discomforts in way people were unfairly/unequally treated; particularly if you are a girl/woman, disabled or identified and expressed yourself in diversity.

ELF 6 was really an interesting, motivating and indeed a great capacity building course. It was a space that allowed young women of all diversities, to come together and share our own personal stories as young women and as leaders; and allowed space to forge new and definite long-lasting friendships.

As hectic as 2015 has ever been for me - ELF 6 gatherings, activities, workshops and of course, the retreats - it never once bored me. And why is that? Because all the ladies were magical princesses, who saw the world as a place that was not only fit for the tiara but also reasonably fit for the throne - to conqueror the world with their mighty powers of FEMININITY & FEMINISM.

The year started with our involvement in the One Billion Rising campaign; and as the months went by; I was rather fortunate to have opportunities to participate and further amplify the activism work that ELF 6 does in spaces such as the Fiji Young Women's Forum, IDAHOT 2015 Unplugged, Pacific Feminist SRHR Strategy Meeting, Free & Equal Campaign and also participating in spaces such as the National HIV/AIDS 5 Year Strategy Planning.

My feministing also took greater heights as the program greatly enhanced and built on to my confidence; and these were greatly commended by my peers who never saw this in me before. This is a key aspect and quality that

a leader must possess and for that I am forever thankful that such programs for young feminist leader exists and can wholly contribute to one's great learning and in harnessing greater potentials.

Despite missing out on the first and last retreat, the activities that followed were just awesome – from our cool “Rise of the Feminist” Exhibition and 16 Days of Activism Video to our great bonding moments at the hotels and not forgetting the enthusiastic sessions on the variety of Topics that we covered, for instance, on human and women omen's rights, SRHR, gender dynamics and politics, climate change and women's representation in mass media, to name a few.

As usual, and this is normal, personal conflicts got in the way. But the good thing about my feminist friends, is how we were able to sit down and get things sorted; and I for one, can see so much that this young group of feminist leaders can do - for our society in national, regional and global spaces, knowing that they can get personal politics out of the way and move forward in striving to achieve our set of GOALS.

My feministing this year wouldn't have been this great, if it wasn't for the tremendous loving support of the staff of the Fiji Women's Right Movement, who genuinely sought to help emerging young leaders like me.

Ending 2015, with our ELF 6 graduation on the December 3rd, will definitely not end my love and passion as a young trans-feminist in advocating on women's issues; particularly for young transgenders. ELF 6 has sparked that little light within me and I can't wait for the LIGHT to IGNITE the LIFE's of others through the greater advocacy work that we have ahead of us in this JOURNEY!

Taraivini Wawe Gadolo

“Her name lingers, emanating strength and vulnerability, ferocity and peace.”

My journey this year as a member of the Emerging Leaders Forum 6 has been so enlightening and one that is filled with much cherished memories.

Being able to surround myself with women that are equally empowering and unique in their own beautiful way, has made this entire ELF 6 journey worthwhile, and one of the greatest experiences.

Throughout this year, there were so many things that were informative, amusing and inspiring. Learning and understanding our Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights; the importance of gender equality; the LGBTIQ community and many other various topics that were equally as enlightening as the rest, made me think outside of the box and wonder what I as an individual could achieve in life.

It made me look beyond the “norm” and how society as whole perceived things. It made me feel inspired and encouraged, knowing how far women have come, living in a patriarchal society in which our views are more or less valued mostly according to our gender or sexuality. Knowing for a fact that women still have a long way to go before we are an equal to men is not discouraging but pushes us as women to achieve more for the next generation of girls and women alike to allow them to be who they want to be without objections, without obligations.

I have enjoyed this entire year but I must say, the retreats were all so memorable to me. It gave me a chance to bond with the talented women in the program and get to know them individually on a human level, which made me treasure them more and count them as dear friends.

This year has taught me a lot about feminism, and the importance of solidarity within a group. This has made relationships stronger – there is self-respect and respect for one another.

ELF 6 has transformed me in many ways. The way I think, how I approach things, it all has developed and changed my attitude towards life as a whole. I am eternally grateful for the opportunities I have come across. All that we have accomplished in this year alone and also the friendships that have come with it. The help from the facilitators and all that we have learnt that has enabled us to stand towards the future and look forward to the time in which all is equal and are not judged solely by their race, gender or sexuality.

I have found myself amongst people who were once strangers uniting towards a cause and standing firm and proudly saying that I am a feminist, and that we all have the ability to be leaders. I have come to count every member, coordinators alike, as spectacular and amazing people, and I will miss the time I have spent with them, the meetings, the retreats, all of which I will cherish.

I'd like to thank you all for everything, the experience, the shared and valued information, and the confidence found in our little safe space. I bid adieu and well wishes to all in the near future, and hopefully, I could be a part of something as spectacular as this once again.

Vinaka.

Taraivini is a first year student at the University of the South Pacific, majoring in psychology. She loves music that soothes the soul, books that allows her mind to run free with such bliss and imagination, poetry that moves her and her my inner goddess and to sketch beauty that truly is.