

UPF Solomon Islands holds a one-day conference on the New Village Movement

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Honiara, Solomon Islands -- UPF of the Solomon Islands hosted a one-day conference titled “New Village Movement: A Model for Sustainable Development.”

The main purpose of the conference was to introduce the New Village Movement, a political initiative used in South Korea to modernize the rural economy, and to discuss how it may be a sustainable development model for the Solomon Islands.

Under this theme, UPF also introduced its work around the world and Oceania, as well as the character education syllabus developed by the International Education Foundation (IEF), an affiliated organization.

The conference was held on October 10, 2016, in the Assembly Chamber of the Headquarters of Guadalcanal Province.



In the Oceania region rural development is a major issue. There is a great dependency on foreign aid and misuse of government funds. Hundreds of funded projects could not be completed, and this has become a problem for aid donors as well. UPF Solomon Islands therefore wishes to give light to the people through the New Village Movement as a model where they could learn and adapt to its principles.

A total of 52 guests participated in this conference, including Provincial Premier Anthony Veke and his 21 Assembly members with all the heads of departments of the provincial administration. Five representatives from the Guadalcanal Council of Women Network also attended, as did three participants from the private sector.

Rev. Richard Yoo, the regional director of UPF for the Oceania region, gave a presentation on the New Village Movement. The concept was interesting to most of the participants, as it reminded them of their childhood days when the culture of the province was strong before the colonial influence replaced it.

After Rev. Yoo’s presentation, the chief training officer of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock spoke about his visit to Korea to observe the New Village Movement. He informed the conference that his office will support the development of the New Village Movement in the Solomon Islands and said he was so happy to be invited to the conference.

This was followed by the appointment of Provincial Premier Anthony Veke as the chair of the New Village Movement program in Guadalcanal and his permanent secretary, Timothy Ngele, as vice chair. This conference, though hosted on a provincial level, had a great impact, as inquiries came from other provinces and national leaders following a two-page publication in one of the local newspapers.

Rev. Greg Stone, the secretary general of UPF for Oceania, gave a talk on UPF and its work around the world, and he also spoke about character education.

Bad habitual behavior has become a problem in rural Guadalcanal. Alcoholism and addiction to

marijuana are also growing problems. Rev. Stone's presentation on the need to educate for character inspired the minister for education and his chief education officer so much that after the conference they immediately made appointments to meet with the director of UPF of the Solomon Islands. The character education program therefore has a green light for a great breakthrough in the near future.

This was one of the first national conferences hosted by UPF in the past three years. Through this conference it became apparent that the concepts presented by UPF are unique. In contrast to the modern trend toward individualism, UPF is strongly calling the people of the world to work in cooperation and for the benefit of all people.



Participants' Responses

It has been a long search by my government to identify a workable model for rural development that can be easily adapted by the people. The conference today has shown us the light, and I hope that the New Village Movement can be introduced to our rural people for further improvement and development of their lives.

-- Hon. Premier Anthony Veke

The character education syllabus as presented by UPF is the only well-developed character education program around. ... We cannot look anywhere else. This is the only program we can adapt to at least reduce the rising social problems in our schools and society today.

-- Hon. Premier Anthony Veke

Character education has been taught in our schools in the older days. This conference reminds us of the importance of reviving such a syllabus back into our education curriculum. A lot of social problems experienced now in the village are started by primary and high school dropouts. I hope this program can address this youth problem.

-- Hon. Minister for Women and Youth

UPF, you have done a great work. I don't know why our leaders who have attended your International Leadership Conference haven't informed us of your great work upon their return. ... I commend you for your great work for peace.

-- Permanent Secretary Timothy Ngele

My government department will definitely look into creating a partnership with your organization. This is the right time now to introduce such an education curriculum in the Guadalcanal education programs before it's too late.

-- Minister for Education

Thank you so much, UPF organizers. Now I have a clear vision on how to work with my village people. The presentations are so inspiring and informative.

-- Guadalcanal women's leader

Recommendations

In order to see the realization of the New Village Movement and character education activities in their province, the participants offered some suggestions.

1. The chief education officer recommended a workshop to educate teachers first before they introduce the syllabus to the children.
2. A working committee to be developed within the Ministry and UPF to implement the New Village Movement training in selected villages.
3. UPF to work in partnership with the Province of Guadalcanal to give awareness and training in the future.