

Morning Memo

Vision: - A well developed and healthy country in which the youths are valued as a significant foundation for the development of our Island Nation.



TNYC receives a facelift

Tonga National Youth Congress is grateful to the crew of the HMAS Adelaide for panting their main office.

HMAS Adelaide is the Royal Australian Navy's newest ship, which visited Tonga for three days in June.

"We're in Tonga to work with our regional partners" said one of its military personnel, "we are also out here to do some community work. To give back to the community and to thank you for having us in Tonga," he concluded.

The crew of HMAS Adelaide, assisted the TNYC by providing paint, and also painting the lobby of the main office, which was really needed to liven up our greeting area.

Tonga is not the only Pacific Island Nation that the HMAS Adelaide's crew has been able to help with various community assistances.

"Before this we were at Tuvalu and before that we were at Vanuatu. This is part of our commitment towards bolstering our bond with our neighbours in the Pacific Region, both in a military sense and a personal sense as well."

The HMAS Adelaide departed from Tonga after docking in Nuku'alofa for only three days, but they were able to help several communities and NGO's, including the TNYC.

The organic vegetable gardens motivating Nakolo: Appetizing results from the TNYC organic gardening pilot project

It has been six months since tropical cyclone Gita made landfall in our small Island Kingdom, and ravaged the islands of Tongatapu and 'Eua. The recovery process is currently ongoing for all sectors of both Island groups.

In the past 6 months, the TNYC has made some contributions to the recovery process with help from its international partners, like Oxfam New Zealand and Tear Fund. The TNYC's programs are moving along swiftly, and on schedule.

In Nakolo, TNYC launched a pilot project aimed at reviving vegetable plots for families of the village, based on organic gardening methods. Vegetable seeds were distributed to 10 families after they were taught the techniques to maintain an organic vegetable garden. These families in Nakolo are now harvesting their vegetables for their dining tables.

"My youngest son just can't get enough of our tomatoes," said one of the mothers at Nakolo who is involved with the TNYC's organic vegetable pilot project. "When the door to the garden opens, our youngest son literally runs in, sit inside the vegetable garden and start eating the tomatoes, so if we are slow to pick them my son will eat them all!"

From the dining tables of families to ceremonial events at Nakolo, the organic vegetable gardens are heartening and uniting the community.

According to Luseane who is one of the TNYC's organic vegetable growers, "I love this program! Not only does it help provide for my family's meals, but it also helps me to save money. Our vegetable gardens helps both our families and our village. Just last week there was a wedding and a head stone memorial here in our village. Most of the vegetables that helped with the food preparation for those events were taken from the TNYC's pilot project's vegetable gardens that we planted."

These vegetable gardens are also inspiring the youth of Nakolo to take up organic vegetable gardening for they have seen first-hand the benefits that can be acquired from the TNYC's pilot project's vegetable gardens.

"Our garden is tended by our son," said one of the fathers involved with this project. He excitedly related to us that "when my son gets back from school, he simply goes straight to the garden and works on it." The boy is still in his mid-teens by he is able to make tomato strings for the plant to wrap itself around, as it spirals upward, among other gardening techniques. The father was unable to contain how proud he was of his son for choosing the organic vegetable garden to be his hobby, especially with the influx of technological advancements into the Tongan society, which he believes is distracting the youth from other positive skills such as organic gardening.

The organic vegetable gardens are encouraging the people of Nakolo to actively participate in their village's recovery process. Every day since these 10 families have started harvesting their vegetables, the TNYC has received requests for additional memberships from people, who were not participants at the launching of the pilot program. These stories are assurances for the TNYC that this pilot project is adding tangible value to the recovery process on Tongatapu. The next step for the program will be Ha'atu'a and Pangai, 'Eua.

