

Local herbs can treat infections

BY Benorah Carrie Hesehing

On a beautiful Monday morning back in 2014, I set out on an assignment to the School of Medicine and Health Sciences to conduct several interviews for my school project. I was dressed for the occasion and excited to collect my stories from the other side of the University campuses but to my disappointment was turned away due to protocol blunder.

However, little did I know my dampen spirit will be lifted by a man of good standing.

Meet Dr Prem Rai.

Yes, this is Dr. Prem Rai of India, a lecturer at the School of Medicines and Health Sciences, a specialist in Pharmacognosy. Pharmacognosy is the study of medicinal drugs obtained from plants or other natural resources. Dr Rai is one of the nicest gentlemen I've ever met who knew nothing about me but had the time in the world to spend with me. He told me all about his field of study and his ambition to make a number of Papua New Guineans mostly rural people know the power of their local plants for medicinal purposes. And this is story of healing plants through the eyes of my good friend Dr Rai.

Dr Rai said while he is from India, he can see the potential of herbal medicines in PNG and wants to educate and facilitate it to become an industry of its own. He said a number of herbal medicines in Papua New Guinea (PNG) have been found effective for the management of infections and useful to people living with HIV (PLHIV). Dr Rai explained that these herbs perform similar functions as the Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART,) where the herbs can suppress the spread of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) while curing the associated symptoms such as diarrhoea, cough and others. Rai says the main contribution of these herbs is to improve the quality of life by effectively treating the associated symptoms and



Some of the local medicinal plants which are researched under the program and considered to be effective to disease treatment and have the potential to boost the economy, once commercialized.



helping patients gain their energies and appetite. The good doctor's findings had him present his papers, at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Society of Pharmacognosy and the International Conference on Traditional & Alternative Medicine in the United Kingdom, where he outlined the herbs commonly used in the management of HIV in PNG.

Dr Rai's presentation was one of the three selected for recognition out of the 67 presentations made at the conference. A moment of pride he later expressed. Added to his proud moment was when a couple of counter-parts expressed their interest to collaborating with UPNG to further Prem's research on commonly used healing plants in PNG.

I further learned from Dr Rai that Traditional medicine practitioners (TMP's) in PNG use a wide range of botanicals in the management of different opportunistic infections in PLWHIV which includes anti-thrush, anti-cough and others. TMPs are people who are recognized in the community for their knowledge and practice of traditional remedies which could be either herbs or cultural spells for medical cure and not to harm the people. This practice is helpful according to Prem for PLWHIV in the rural areas or those who quit ART because of its side-effects.

He said the process of extract-

ing herbal juice with water to treat diseases commonly used by TMP's in PNG is scientifically proven to be effective. And that the combined use of traditional medicine with ART or anti-TB drug could dramatically alter their efficacy. Dr Rai explained while HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis (TB) infections constitute a large portion of diseases in PNG and about 33,000 people are currently living with HIV, he the Drug Discovery and the Development of Herbal Medicine is identified as one of the promising programs for the economy and the people of Papua New Guinea.

Meanwhile, in the medical campus, Pharmacognosy students claim to have discovered several plants which can be used to suppress the spread of HIV and other related diseases and Prem enlightened me on the current university partnerships. The UPNG-SMHS has been working closely with the University of Utah under International Corporate Biodiversity Group (ICBG) on the development of these herbal medicines. The program aims to produce medicines from medicinal herbs and eventually introduce a herbal industry that will produce and sell herbal medicines based on scientific evidence. It also targets to train post-graduate and honours students in pharmacy and pharmacology under the

supervision of Dr.Rai and former colleague Professor Lohi Matahaino.

"There is no other herbal medicine developer in the Pacific apart from this initiative. There are big herbal drug markets in the USA and the Europe and that USA know in particular that PNG has good herbal medicines," Dr Rai said. He added that all now depends on the quality produced. Prem said if the medicines produced are able to cure disease completely then it will generate good income for PNG. "The herb samples are gathered through field research and taken to laboratory to isolate lead molecules which are then processed into medicines. T

This program has been there for a long time but only now that it was recognized as one of the sustainable development project by the PNG Science & Technology Secretariat," said Dr. Rai.

I also learned from two happy local producers their satisfaction in producing home-grown medicines.

Mrs Joanne Bauro from Central province, a local producer and seller of noni herbal juice and oil said this will be a way forward for them as well.

"Noni herb is a multi-purpose herb for body treatment and it is good to be scientifically tested and produced in large quantity for the market," Mrs Bauro said.

Another herbal medicine vendor, David John from Eastern Highlands Province who sells Vita-plus products at Tokarara said that this is a beneficial initiative for the people of PNG.

Dr Prem Rai certainly educated me on the world of herbal plants, that beautiful Monday morning and me hearing testimonies of local herbal producers, I now appreciate more than ever that PNG's plants where if researched properly will save millions of lives from lifestyle diseases and other related infection.

Stop the filthy habit tips...

How to avoid spitting buai around public areas and at your home



Carry a plastic bag when strolling out for a buai break...



Skin the buai and drop skin in plastic bag...



Chew buai...



and spit into plastic...



Tie the plastic tightly..

Throw away plastic at the rubbish tip near you...



Rubbish Drum

YOUR SAY...

Josiah
Ururu Kana

Our country is faced with many economic, social and political problems. Whether it is in lack of education or poverty on increase, to law and order problems and violence against women, the list goes on and on. So as a citizen, what specified problem or issue do you think is very important and must be included in the next government's priorities? Give reasons for your answers.



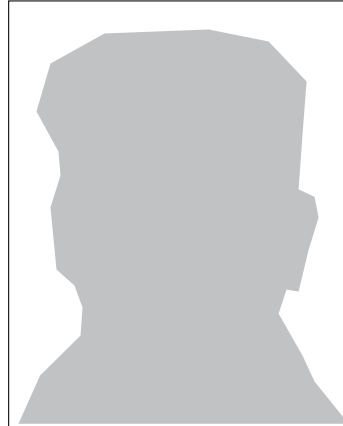
Name: Reginald Jambik **Age:** 22
Province: East Sepik Province
School/Work: Student of International Training Institute
Opinion- I think the most important problem that needs to be included in the next government's priority is the issue of being in debts. Many problems we face today in the country are a result of us being under huge debts. Money is going out of our nation to pay back loans thus, causing the economy to run down, unemployment increase, wage drops and inflation.



Name: Tizuha Kay
Age: 18
Province: Eastern Highlands Province
School/Work: Student
Opinion- I believe Health is a problem that needs our next government's attention and should be included in their priorities. Our government should concentrate on health because the cost for medical drugs is very high, and most of our provinces needs more medical facilities. Also, our people need to live a healthy lifestyle because health is a service is all men women and child will benefit from.



Name: Nathen Bal
Age: 20
Province: Simbu
School/Work: School
Opinion- Our government needs to address the issue of poverty. Poverty happens when people become unable to support themselves and needs other people to provide for their needs. Poverty is increasing because of lack of government services such as education, health service, etc... the issue of poverty should be discussed in the floor of our next parliament and concerns should be raised.



Name: Mathew Marabe
Age: 22
Work/School: Self-employed
Opinion- I believe our government need to put more emphasis on education. Lack of education causes illiteracy. Because most of our people are illiterate, they develop problems being submissive to authorities and they don't know how to understand and handle situations. Problems like violence against women and "buai ban" are just products of people being uneducated.

Heroic sister helps her fellowmen

By Bp. Rolando Santos, CM, Diocese of Alotau-Sideia

SISTER Ma Theresa Trinh Vu Phuong, FMA, has been helping Vietnamese fishermen to be freed and repatriated to their home country.

Over 130 of these Vietnamese fishermen have been detained in the prisons of Alotau, Giligili and Bomana in Papua New Guinea for illegally fishing and harvesting berche-de-mere in Milne Bay Province.

Sr. Trinh looks after the needs of these Vietnamese detainees and serves as interpreter and mediator for them at court hearings. She also communicates with their families back home, and arranges for payment of penalties and getting all the necessary documents and tickets for them to fly back home to Vietnam.

Sr. Trinh is a Vietnamese Salesian Sister working in a girls' skills training Institute in Sideia Island, diocese of Alotau.

"It is very disturbing that these young Vietnamese fishermen might be victims of human trafficking. They are used by whoever employs them to fish illegally without a proper license or any guarantee of protection or security from their employers.

"There is an urgent humanitarian need to put a stop to this. It is a serious abuse on the rights and dignity of these young men to be sent out by their recruiters to fish in illegal waters without a proper license and without any guarantee of protection or security. Once caught, they are almost totally forgotten and abandoned.

"The rights of these young men need to be respected, and a better employment worthy of their dignity be afforded to them," said Bishop Rolando Santos, CM.

Sr. Trinh was already able to successfully process the repatriation of 87 Vietnamese fishermen. About 18 more will soon follow. All will soon be able to re-join their families back home, thanks to the courage of this small sister and the support given by her Salesian community.

The Governor of Milne Bay Province has expressed his deep gratitude to Sr. Trinh for the help she has given in facilitating the case of the Vietnamese detainees. The diocese is proud of her. Her charity is truly heroic and worthy of emulation.



SISTER Ma Theresa Trinh Vu Phuong, FMA, has been helping Vietnamese fishermen to be freed and repatriated to their home country.

Growing in human formation and Salesian spirituality

Sr. Marivel Monteveros, Deputy Principal DBSTC

Port Moresby:

The Deputy Principals of Don Bosco schools and colleges of the vice-province of PNG/SI gathered at the Emmaus Conference Centre, Port Moresby, from 4th to 6th May, 2017 for a three-day workshop. The program for the 19 participants, including two from Peter Channel School, Port Moresby led them on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment to enhance their leadership styles in their own settings. It was coordinated by Fr. Robinson Parappilly SDB.

Leadership and the Enneagram was carefully crafted, planned and delivered by Bro. Alfred Tivinarlik on the first day. It touched on leadership styles, core emotions and our frame of reference. It enabled the participants take a look at their strengths and weaknesses and opened up possibilities to turn one's weaknesses into strengths.

The Salesian Education System, its nature, delivery, content, perspective and purpose was dealt with by Fr. Ariel Macatangay SDB. Using the Salesian Youth Ministry framework the participants were able to evaluate their school activities to ensure the integral development of youth. The present issues of exploitation of youth, the environment and social issues were reflected upon.

"We've commenced on a project design for our Salesian school. This will be developed together with our respective school colleagues", said Sr. Marivel Monteveros from DBSTC, Kumgi.

The Preventive System of Don Bosco and Salesian Spirituality were highlighted by Fr. Alfred Maravilla SDB, Provincial of PGS on the last day. His interesting discussions focused on the life and mentality of St. John Bosco in the "Preventive System".

"I can feel the heartbeat of Don Bosco in his wish for the young. There are things I wasn't doing right and I will try my best to change them", said Ms. Charmaine Komeo from DBTS, Gabutu. Mr. Renato from Vunabosco said, "I learned a lot about Salesian education and it will help me in my school as I go about my task as deputy principal." "I had looked at the Preventive System before, but this session provided me with a deeper understanding and clearer direction on how to instil Bosconian values in our students," said



Group photo - Seminar of Deputies and HOD'S of Don Bosco Colleges and schools in Port Moresby

Ms. Stephanie Heritrenggi from DBTI Henderson, Solomon Islands. "I have been empowered to go back to my school and raise up the standard with more energy and vigour", said Joseph Aaron from Don Bosco Rural Training Centre, Tetere, Solomon Islands.

The two participants from Peter Chanel Catholic Agency School, expressed their joy at being part of the program. "I was able to get to know the deep identity of the Salesian schools, the foundation, the make-up of the educational Pastoral Plan, and the words from the founder Don Bosco. It has helped me to see where my school is, the approaches we use and that we try and plan for changes that are necessary for a Salesian school. Working, staying, praying and sharing with the other deputies of Don Bosco Schools and Colleges in the Salesian Spirit is enjoyable and refreshing," they said.

Regular refreshing spiritual seminars for the staff, a lay Salesian handbook, networking and sharing the progress and development of each school were among the recommendations of the participants.

At the conclusion, Fr. Robinson read out the pastoral letter of Bishops of PNG/SI on 'Care, Protection and catechising of our children'. "It is now our duty to echo the content of the seminar and hopefully we can share the elements of the preventive system", he said.



In session with Fr Alfred SDB.



Deputy principals at the Workshop 2.

Maiden Adventure Part II...

By Philemon Tame

DULL weather consists of visible cloud water droplets and ice crystals suspended in the air covered the alpine's surface chasing us. Foggy weather associated with extreme cold which allocated our pace of walking at a fixed rate.

Mt. Sugarloaf (Lamindi) reposes opposite of Mt. Giluwe, a com-

plement structure for the low lying clouds to rest their wings.

Mt. Sugarloaf separates Tambul Valley in Western Highlands and Tsaka Valley in Enga Province. Laminidi is the source of many fast flowing rivers in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Rivers, Kaugel, Mendi and Lai in WHP, SHP and Enga respectively are all sourced by

Lamindi.

We could only see nothing but clouds were on our sight. Water droplets accumulated and flooding the forest floor was the cause of the disappeared hiking track.

It was already 5.30 pm and mountain wildlife fashioned afternoon melodies of their kind in welcoming the emerging Saturday night.

Taciturn afternoon terminated our desire of overnight at the peak. Every boy agreed not to stay back for the afternoon's dull weather was the blockade to look for a shelter.

Our eagerness of returning home accelerated our rate of walk and the village was reached in an hour.

Maiden Adventure is an unforgettable experience.



Mountain grassland rainforests overwhelmed by the afternoon low lying clouds.

Prairies and tropical forests, the first impression to the peak, rests to welcome the maiden trekkers.



Attractive panorama of Mt Giluwe from Ialibu, Southern Highlands.



Inner tropical breathtaking floras deliver fresh oxygen while trekking.



Track in the tropical forest floor leads to the summit.



Scenic outlook of the initial peak, Perelumundu.