



A Guyanese scholar implementing integrated monitoring tools around the coast, as part of an AIS joint research programme.

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Separated by oceans, connected by common issues: two volunteers with the Archipelagic and Island States Forum

Talei Caucau and Linnet Reid have been both serving as national UN Youth Volunteers with the Archipelagic and Island States Forum of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Indonesia. Talei lives in Fiji, while Linnet resides in Jamaica Kingston, several time zones away – 17 hours to be exact. Despite being separated by oceans, the two UN Youth Volunteers are connected by common issues.

The Archipelagic and Island States Forum (AIS Forum) is UNDP Indonesia's one of a kind project, serving as a platform to bring together 47 archipelagic and island states to collaborate on common challenges and opportunities faced by island nations. Talei and Linnet are the AIS Forum's Programme Development Specialists for the Asia Pacific and Caribbean Regions respectively.

As national UN Youth Volunteers, they provide vital support to the AIS Forum by providing the mostly Jakarta-based team with first-hand knowledge and understanding of the local contexts of their regions, as well as by identifying and engaging with local stakeholders for the programme. They coordinate events and projects related to the conservation and restoration of marine ecosystems through academics' community, entrepreneurship, and

the development of the start-up community of practice in sectors of the blue economy.

Working together for the AIS Forum, Talei and Linnet discovered many parallels between the reality of life in the Pacific and Caribbean islands, despite the vast distance between them.

Talei Caucau: "We are rich in cultures and languages and have strong connections to our land and people"

Talei is a proud Fijian, serving as a UN Youth Volunteer with UNDP Indonesia's Archipelagic and Island States Project. Currently enrolled in a Master's degree programme at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, she completed her Bachelor of Commerce at the University of the South Pacific.

Talei's daily work involves community engagement and project management across Pacific countries. She oversees designing and implementing programmes, as well as ensuring activities and events have the greatest possible impact. As a result, the AIS Forum has been able to host beach clean-ups and raise awareness to the youth about the dangers of marine plastic debris and the importance of traditional methods of marine conservation. For her, the programmes have successfully provided youth with bigger perspective. They also support non-profits stakeholders with the community engagement and contributing financially to small and medium sized enterprises and other small businesses.

The experiences in the AIS Forum made Talei realize that she wants to work in the development sector of the Pacific region to support indigenous people. This is where her heart is – helping youth and young children find their passion and objectives in life so they can contribute to their region. She especially wants to encourage educated Pacific Islanders to return to the region and add value to their Vanua (*ancestral home*).

We are a region of small nations. Our contribution to the world's economy is so small compared to industrialized countries. Yet, we are rich in cultures and languages and have strong connections to our land and people. I hope Pacific Islanders will begin to look at our own homelands and other parts of the Pacific region to support our indigenous communities. We have so much to share even when there is so little in our homes. Pacific culture reveals its love, kindness and gratitude in so many ways. --Talei Caucau, UN Youth Volunteer Programme Development Specialist with UNDP, Indonesia



UN Youth Volunteers Talei Caucau (left) and Linnet Reid, serving with the UN Development Programme in Indonesia. ©UNV, 2022

Linnet Reid: "Let us ensure that the next generation develop the right mindset from the very start"

Across the oceans, several time zones away – 17 hours to be exact – Linnet serves on the same team. Born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, she obtained her Bachelor's degree in International Relations and Political Science and Master's degree in Politics and International Cooperation and Development through a tripartite programme jointly delivered by the University of the West Indies, the Institute for Political Studies of Bordeaux and the University of the Antilles in Martinique.

Linnet has helped the AIS Forum to fulfil its mission of raising awareness and building capacity in the Caribbean region through educational events, workshops and trainings. She has facilitated the AIS Forum's Scholar Space programme, helping to promote the knowledge and expertise of the Caribbean academic community on issues surrounding ocean and coastal health and conservation, sustainable tourism, climate change and mitigation and maritime governance.

“ You can never talk enough about these issues, especially with younger people. It is important to target youth and encourage them to consider sustainability in all they do, including in their attitudes towards our marine resources. Let us ensure that the next generation develop the right

mindset from the very start. I am glad to facilitate the sharing of
“ information through the AIS Forum. --Linnet Reid, UN Youth Volunteer
Programme Development Specialist with UNDP, Indonesia

For Linnet, volunteering with the AIS Forum has been a rewarding one, allowing her to connect with and learn from colleagues across the globe in Indonesia, Fiji, Mauritius and Ireland. The experience reinforced for her the fact that as islanders and global citizens, we are all connected by common issues despite being separated by vast oceans. Through the United Nations Volunteers programme, the AIS Forum has shown to be a great example of Indonesia's leadership to connect and collaborate with islanders from all over region and lead the youth movement especially from Pacific and Caribbean.

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