

People behind the scenes: Kamlesh Prakash



Everyone carries around their own stereotype of people from a certain country or region. This can sometimes be prejudicial and jeopardize human and business relationships and careers, especially in this era of globalization. Despite the danger of roughly categorizing people based on their origins, we sometimes meet people who match the general features and think to ourselves “see?” with a knowing nod. I assume that most people who meet Kamlesh Prakash, Secretariat Research and Planning Program Officer, would say, “I knew it,” when they learn that he is from Fiji because he embodies the friendliness, generosity, and openness associated with those beautiful islands renowned for their swaying palm trees and gentle breezes.

“His cheerful, friendly disposition and personal passion for knowledge management (KM) throughout the meeting... made the learning and sharing sessions really enjoyable and open,” wrote a participant in a recent KM study meeting held in Malaysia of which Prakash was in charge. It is clear that other people also feel the same way about him.

However, when you hear his enthusiastic, encouraging, enlightening presentations on any topic he is responsible for, you quickly realize that his easygoing disposition is not the result of his birthplace but rather of his confidence in his work. His consummate professionalism was again

confirmed in the recently completed impact evaluation survey. Since Prakash was assigned to the project in March this year, his work schedule has been busier than ever. He managed to juggle the demands of issuing a project notification and developing questionnaires and the onsite interview instruments while coordinating with NPOs. Although the project encountered a setback when the designated external expert became ill and had to withdraw from the mission, Prakash managed to keep all the balls in the air.

“It was impressive that he managed to identify a replacement expert who was both capable and available for such a difficult assignment on a tight schedule within only two days. I was pleasantly surprised at the scope of his professional network and his risk-management capacity,” commented a Secretariat colleague. Despite everything, Prakash completed his mission on schedule, visiting six countries with the expert in tow as planned. When he returned to the office from the first batch of interviews, this writer witnessed Prakash hard at work catching up with the backlog on his desk and preparing for another 10-day mission. Although he looked somewhat tired, he still had that smile on his face showing his true character and fortitude. Or maybe that is just because he is from ‘miles of isles and isles of smiles.’ Please correct me if I am wrong. 