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Seeking the Good Life in Fiji: Managing Educational Transitions

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ABSTRACT This article describes Kai Viti High School (KVHS), a rural school on Kadavu Island, Fiji. Ecological levels of analysis are used as the instruments to describe both the school and the context in which it functions. Recent political and cultural disagreements between indigenous- and Indo-Fijians has been partly attributed to their contrasting beliefs in business and education. Indigenous Fijians are less likely to own a business or attain the educational levels as compared with those of Indo-Fijians. A new discourse has arisen admonishing indigenous Fijians to re-evaluate those cultural beliefs and practices that are impeding their children from receiving an education. Students in rural areas are less likely to enter tertiary education due to poverty and a reluctance to leave their family and home village. Of those who do enter this arena, only approximately 25 percent successfully complete their studies, and some of this attrition has been ascribed to culture shock resulting from the jump from a rural to urban environment. It is suggested that a transition program to prepare students for this new environment would be beneficial in helping students to psychologically adjust prior to going off to further education, and therefore lead to greater success.