



EU Grassroots Governance Project Commences

Twenty-four community based organizations (CBOs) located along the Matawalu-Lautoka Corridor responded enthusiastically to the invitation for a one day consultation held at FRIEND as work was initiated for the new year.

The consultation presented a platform to share FRIEND's plan for the next two years and create awareness on the European Union funded *Grassroots Voices for Good Governance* project planned over next two years.

FRIEND hopes to work on building capacity of 32 community

based organisations that are interested and register for the program.

Selected community based organisations will undergo training in governance and participatory budgeting and will be part of research undertaken on selected sustainable development goals.

Accountability mechanism training for women and youth groups will be conducted and assessed by USP Lautoka Campus.

Each of the CBO will be able to access a small grant under the Project. They will be expected to write proposals and spend as per good governance principles focused on sustainable community development projects.



Elders Blessing for the Medical outfit



The land owning village and church elders visited FRIEND this month to bless the upcoming SMILE Medical Centre which will be officially opened this year. The Medical facility which is almost ready will offer holistic health services to surrounding villages

and settlements. Above the medical facility, a local food restaurant is being developed. The visitors had the chance to get a walk about FRIEND with Director and Founder Sashi Kiran and Associate Director Dr Jone Hawea, to look at various programs and services being provided.



War Against Pesticide Continues ...

Travelling around Fiji in January we have found that schools are spraying Glyphosate and Armine, two weedicides to manage grass in compounds and drains. World Health Organisation (WHO) has confirmed that these



chemicals are carcinogenic (cancer causing) and when it breaks down these chemicals become more dangerous for health. Our Children will be playing in school grounds exposed to cancer causing chemicals....Any wonder why there has been an increase in cancers in children? To make it worse those spraying wear no protective gear exposing themselves as well. This picture (taken on a Drasa farm) is a common sight which shows exposure risk to those who spray without protective gears.

FAO & FRIEND running a joined reforestation project



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Reforestation is one of many areas FRIEND sees a need to get everyone involved in. Sustainable Development Goal 15 emphasized the requirement to halt and reverse land degradation and to protect and restore local forests, something Fiji needs to invest in. Together with the Food and Agriculture



grating and planting various other fruit trees to ensure better soil management.

These include breadfruit, tavola nuts



culture team. 50 children were involved in the planting and learning the importance of tree planting.

The communities have been waiting for rain and now are involved in inte-



brought in from Cicia Island, mangoes, star fruit, soursop, custard apple and vaivai.

The agriculture team has been supporting and monitoring the replanting.

Organisation (FAO), FRIEND was able to conduct training on reforestation. 2150 coconut seedlings have been planted by Fijian families in 3 different villages in the Western Division of Fiji.

FRIEND made this a combined project between the medical and the agri-



Karate & Games

During school holidays we organised creative games for children in villages around FRIEND. The fun games are designed to encourage creative thinking, planning and expression among our young ones. We thank Jasmine



Rafiq for volunteering her time to lead these games. During the year we will be organising Saturday classes for children and there will be more programs organised during next holidays. Also our community exercise program got spiced up this month when Jasmine introduced some karate moves as part of regular exercise program for women. Children joined in as well. As part of our fight against non communicable diseases FRIEND SMILE Health team has been organising regular community exercise programs.



**Product of the Month—
Friend's Fiji Style®**

7



Friend's Fiji Style® 7 Grains or “Satwa” is prepared using ancient processes generations old. The recipe came to Fiji with the indentured labourers who would use the various homegrown grains for a meal or a snack as they headed out for work in the early hours of the morning. Satwa makes for easy to prepare, healthy and nutritious meals. The word satwa originates from the hindi word for seven. Farmers around Fiji grow a variety of pulses and these are dried and preserved. To make Satwa, women carefully select 7 different grains (Maize, Red Rice, Cowpeas, Pigeon Peas, Green Gram, Black Gram and Sorghum) and roast each before blending and mixing these together. For a healthy high protein food Satwa can be eaten by mixing milk and honey or water and sugar for a healthy breakfast or added in your smoothies and flour mixes for baking. You can make laddoos by adding milk and honey and rolling these into small balls. It is commonly served cold for breakfast as a porridge or soft dough. Sweet dishes combine satwa with fruit slices, sugar and milk. In savoury dishes satwa may be flavored with green chili, lemon juice and salt.

Livelihood assessment for AQEP in Ra

Over a week-end our team met with AQEP school management in the province of Ra to assess resources and assist in establishment of livelihood projects for schools to ensure sustainable income for the establishment.



New partnerships to fight against NCDs



to AQEP schools in partnership with Access to Quality Education Program. Assessment visits will be followed up with capacity building before income generation programs are set up.

BSP visits FRIEND

General Manager of BSP Mr Kevin McCarthy and his team visited our office to discuss potential rural savings schemes products with our team. FRIEND is looking forward to having various savings products available. This will be additional to various investment products we are encouraging our communities to invest in.



NZAID visits FRIEND



FRIEND Director Sashi Kiran and associate Director Dr Jone Hawea met with Rev. Tevita Nawadra Banivanua, the President of the Methodist Church of Fiji to discuss non communicable diseases and health challenges among church members with the hope of partnership in the fight against NCDs.

New Zealand AID took out time to visit the FRIEND office this month. Sashi used this opportunity to demonstrate to them the results of the projects NZAID has been a donor for and how those projects evolved from there.

Recipe Corner — Tasty Maize Curry



Ingredients

Fresh Maize –2 Cobs
2x medium Tomatoes, 1 small onion, 2 cloves of garlic, 2cm cube of ginger, 1tsp turmeric, 2 tspn curry masala, 2 medium chillies, 1/2 tsp each of cumin, mustard seeds and fenugreek, 1 sprig of curry leaves.

Oil for saute
Fresh Coriander leaves for garnish

Method

1. Uncob maize with a knife and put it through the food processor. The end consistency should of a fine to medium blend.

2. Put a deep pot in fire and add oil when the pot is heated.
3. Add chopped onions together with the rest of spices and cook till browned,
4. Add tomatoes and cook for a few minutes before adding blended corn.
5. Saute till the mixture starts sticking to the bottom. Add 3 cups of water and bring to boil.
6. Turn the heat down and simmer on low heat for 15– 20 minutes.
7. Add coriander leaves and stir through before serving with rice or roti.

By Sandhya Narayan

Words of the Wise

Real human beings take precedence over partisan interests, however legitimate the latter may be”

Pope Francis
@ the SDG Summit 2015



In Memory of...

We pay tribute to Mr Samuel Reuben, a guide, mentor and social worker for decades serving quietly communities in need in rural areas.

Mr Reuben, a retired teacher, was the president of Fiji Council of Social Services when he passed away on 7th January leaving behind memories of comradeship, fun and laughter.

He was an active member and ordained pastor of Methodist Church of Fiji and was heavily involved in community organisations and education of children.

He had a unique art of communication and those who remember him will fondly remember his humorous stories that relayed his messages. He will be dearly missed in community service sector in the western division.



January Birthdays



Income Generating Projects—planning in Labasa



Schools in the Northern Division accepted an invitation of FRIEND to attend a two days event about how to be assisted in setting up income generation projects under the Access to Quality Education Program (AQEP). The Khatri Hall in Labasa was full of action. Rugby, drama and other group activities were on the schedule for the two days. The participants were confronted with topics like auditing and corruption. Using Rugby and drama gave all participants different perspective on those day to day issues. These activities were Facilitated by FRIEND director Sashi Kiran and FRIEND Labasa staff to challenge the school's business minds on planning and budgeting, two essential features of a successful business. And the planned IGP's will be just like that ... successful and sustainable school businesses.



SDG Update

This is year one of the SDG journey and these goals will be our guiding star for the next 15 years.



And the main challenge for us, that is the NGO's is building on awareness and promotion of citizens participation in initiatives that contribute to the overall goals.

So what exactly are SDG's? - Simply put , the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a set of targets that guide development priorities for the next 15 years.

The agenda has both been applauded and dismissed as too ambitious. Ambition is good. Perhaps, failure is even to be expected. But as global targets for all humanity, they should continually push member states to aim higher and strive to do **more**.

It is easy to identify obstacles, starting with the \$3 trillion price tag that experts reckon is needed. The scale of the goals — not only delivering more to the poorest people on the planet, but changing patterns of consumption and production for the “haves,” eliminating corruption and altering centuries of tradition and behavior when dealing with gender — can only be called daunting. There are other more mundane problems — such as measuring impact and figuring out how to hold the U.N. member governments accountable. Money may ultimately be the least of the problems.

But one thing is for sure, every action will count . What change do you need to make to ensure that sustainability of the planet for our future generations?

By Sandhya Narayan