



FRIEND'S

Response to Tropical Cyclone Winston

Every community FRIEND works with in the Western Division has been affected by TC Winston in one way or the other. FRIEND has a mammoth task ahead to respond to these communities' needs. We moved swiftly to assess the effects of Tropical Cyclone Winston on the communities we work with. When we started in Lautoka things looked bad, but when we visited Ba and then Tavua it got worse. Rakiraki stood the worst affected with reportedly more than 5000 homes totally destroyed.

It was clear we had to start our relief work where people were in most despair, often hundreds of people struggling to find shelter in one or two partly destroyed homes standing in their villages. Nakorotubu and Nalawa districts were worst hit.

Sashi Kiran, our CEO arrived into Fiji from Mongolia within two days of Cyclone where she was attending executive meeting of ASPBAE and Dr Jone Hawea, Associate Director had just arrived from India a day before the cyclone. Without waiting to recover from jetlag both visited communities with basic relief items like food, water, clothing and consulted the communities on their needs. The need was immense. It was heart warming to note that citizens of Fiji gave generously, within days of cyclone food rations, clothes and other needs were fulfilled by citizens from Suva and Nadi. However the one urgent need that everyone called for was shelter.



The management consulted the board and quick decisions were made. Fiji Community Development Program through AUSAID provided funds for temporary shelter materials. Staff, board, friends of FRIEND from Fiji and abroad providing cash swiftly. Every dollar donated has been used for purchase of roofing iron and nails. FRIEND has been covering all costs of delivery and staff.

"The need is so much that we need every cent of donation coming in to go towards building materials" said Sashi. ... *To be continued on page 2.*

6 Roofing Iron sheets made a HOME – A FRIEND Approach post TC Winston in the worst affected Ra.

The devastation TC Winston had in the province of Ra affected the four districts of Korotubu, Nalawa, Rakiraki and Saivou especially those communities closer to the coastal areas where most were left without a home, dry clothes food and clean water. The rapid assessment made a few days after the disaster by FRIEND was to determine two main issues:

1. What were the needs as identified by the communities?
2. What capacity did the communities have to address these needs themselves?

Coastal villages of Nakorotubu district had reportedly had 90% of homes wiped out. FRIEND made the rapid assessments in the following



communities: Fijian villages - Nausori, Burenitu, Matawailevu, Korovou, Narikoso, Naocobau, Namarai, Saioko, Verevere, Nabukadra, Nayavutoka, Navuniivi, Nayavuiru, Nasau, Veidrala, Delaiyadua, Matainananu, Nadogoloa, Naivoco. Indo Fijian settlements – Barotu, Volivoli, Waimalika, Bainisoqosoqo, Naria and Madhvani.



In most of these communities, the need that was expressed the most was to have a temporary home built. This came as a surprise to FRIEND as we perceived that they would request for food, water or clothing first. The responses to our further enquiries on this matter were;

- Their homes have been destroyed and

gone with it were their dreams, hard work, assets, a family's stronghold, memories, aspirations etc.

- Parents and household leaders felt they had a "mental block" with the loss of the home and the sooner they were in a home environment the easier it would be to figure the rest of the issues out.
- Food and water sources were readily available in many coastal communities so they did not feel they will have an issue with that immediately.
- The evacuation centre was occupied in a rush and there was no clarity on how they were going to manage themselves as the number of families was more than the space could cater for in a day. Hygiene, sanitation, food and water, safety and security issues were slowly creeping in as potential sources for conflict.
- There were already cases of conflicts amongst evacuees in two of these Evacuation Centres.

Villages that were completely wiped out said with such devastation they did not know where



to and how to begin rebuilding their lives. We discussed the basics of what they had and some starting points so they could have their much needed home spaces.

Villages spoke about their fallen forests that could be used for basic frames if they could access chain saws, they mentioned they had a lot of carpenters and builders and had a lot of available hands however they only had rubble to build from. FRIEND offered to find 6 x 12ft roofing iron for each house totally destroyed. This became a starting point for many. As FRIEND started delivering roofing iron we saw hope and men started building from debris timber to build frames, walls and flooring of their destroyed homes and the squeezed debris roofing iron flattened for walls and toilets. ... *To be continued on page 2.*

... Continued: FRIEND's Response

Building materials were being provided to worst hit communities, that is communities which had lost all or almost all their homes and were in urgent need for shelter. Some of these communities did not even have community hall or church standing leaving families to rebuild from rubble. Serving these communities meant that field staff and management travelled 3 hours each way every day for at least first 3 weeks to assess and organise communities. Deliveries continues in the same manner.

FRIEND communities affected from Tavua to Lautoka also had been calling for assistance. FRIEND mobilised programs team to visit and listen to these communities. Donated Food, clothing, diapers and backyard seeds were distributed while we assessed these communities. Labasa team quickly checked on all their communities and how they fared with cyclone.



Staff nurse Vatisveva Delai attending to a female

suffering from hypertension had access to their medications. SMILE reported that increasing number of patients have been coming with high blood pressure. Stress levels in the communities have been very high due to their losses. There are also reports of deaths from heart attacks and strokes as some lost their homes.

Road to recovery is a long haul for the communities and FRIEND team has been trying to ensure support all the way. Our office also sustained minor damages so did some staff homes and office and staff did not have access to electricity for weeks... however these seem so minor when we visit Ra communities struggling without having a basic place to live in, families who have lost all and sit in darkness every evening, having lit fires to smoke the mosquitoes away, wondering how to protect their families and small children from the elements.



gave much hope and support to those affected.

Community based organizations, families, companies stacked their cars with food and tried to reach out to as many as possible.

Most told us they felt comforted when they were in a state of shock, after traumatic events of having to run and suffer the impact of Tropical cyclone, having to take shelter in one or two homes that were saved enough to give shelter. Most

FRIEND SMILE

Team also mobilised itself rapidly first into FRIEND communities then worst hit Ra communities. Other than providing primary care the objective was also to ensure that diabetics and those

suffering from hypertension had access to their medications. SMILE reported that increasing number of patients have been coming with high blood pressure. Stress levels in the communities have been very high due to their losses. There are also reports of deaths from heart attacks and strokes as some lost their homes.

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Citizen action in the first two weeks after tropical Cyclone Winston devastated thousands of households from Ba to Rakiraki

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... Continued: 6 Roofing Iron sheets made a HOME

At least they had a temporary space to keep their families protected from the elements when tents were scarce.



Barnes family donated 4 chainsaws and Impact Fiji/ SPC through European Union loaned 3 more chainsaws. Youths organised themselves and identified trained chainsaw operators who were briefed and started cut-



ting timber with 7 chainsaws. It was clear that all they needed was new roofing iron and some nails. FRIEND decided that this was the relief item most rele-

vant to them. Due to the number of families affected FRIEND decided to mobilise funding to assist each family with 6 x 12 feet corrugated roofing iron, 1kg 4 inch nails, 1kg 3 inch nails and 1kg roofing nails that was able to allow for an 18 feet x 12 feet Lean to Type Temporary Home to be built. Australian Aid through FCDP, Munro Leys and individual donors and groups provided donations. Staff of FRIEND also donated to help purchase much needed roofing iron.



In two weeks more than 500 temporary homes were built by the communities themselves working in groups and whenever a home was completed the families started shifting in and the women, children, the elderly and people living with disabilities were relieved to have a decent dry space they could start calling home again. By this time a lot more assistance came in the form of food and clothing and these were easily distributed amongst the individual families and they found that now it was much easier to manage because they were now in the comfort of their own 'HOMES'.

By Dr Jone Hawea

Communities Mobilize to Help Each Other

families had spent nights exposed as their homes had blown away, crouched under the floors or stood with their babies in standing concrete bathrooms they couldnot believe they were alive. Even harder was to imagine a new beginning. Many said they felt comfort and hope when they were assisted by so many citizens who just came to offer their help when they needed it the most. Limited food in these 'temporary' shelters meant that efforts were being made to feed their children but elders, women and men had limited or no food until the good Samaritans arrived. Within two weeks some communities and companies even took roofing iron for distribu-



tion. Family members also called and provided financial assistance and building materials for many who had lost everything. With crops and livelihood destroyed taking loans and thinking of repayments is unthinkable for many.

Slowly the communities have started to organize themselves and groups have started clearing debris, cutting timber for building frames, planting for food security. There is a long way to go for rebuilding but with citizen support we are hopeful that rebuilding will make our communities stronger.

TC Winston changes EU visit to FRIEND

At the end of 2015 the European Union and FRIEND signed yet another partnership agreement, this time work on the project “Grassroots Voices for Good Governance”. A launch of the two year project was planned for the last week of February at the FRIEND Headquarter in Tuvu. Tropical Cyclone Winston came uninvited with something else in mind and the planned event changed its focus.



Sharing memories of TC Evan in 2012

FRIEND Director/ Founder Sashi Kiran and Associate Director Dr Jone Hawea welcomed EU ambassador Andrew Jacobs, Head of EU delegation in the South Pacific, Mr Ugo Estuto, Deputy Managing



Director Asia & Pacific of European External Action Service (EEAS), Jediminas Varanavicius, Head of Trade, Political & Information and Mr Michalis Rokas, Charge d’ Affairs EU Delegation to New Zealand.



Everyone in the room had clearly only one thing on their mind ... how and how quickly can we help the victims of TC Winston? At that point the extent of damage was not known. However, FRIEND had already started to conduct needs assessments in its communities and there was a fair idea on challenges ahead.

The European Union reiterated its support to FRIEND and its upcoming relief and project work indicating that the bond of trust be-

tween the two organizations has come far since FRIEND started its tentative partnership with the EU in 2012.



FAO project: Helping to prepare communities for disaster FRIEND Labasa

Making tavioka flour for home consumption is nothing new for older generation. They taught us the traditional way of beating and drying tavioka for flour which when trialed says better than modern methods !

20 communities in the west and north have been buzzing with trials and recipes of food preservation. These included preparing flour from a range of root crops, breadfruit, drying

and smoking of fish and meat and drying of fruits.

All this has been part of FRIEND’s work in communities for food security in times of disasters. This work is being undertaken in partnership with Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO).

The pictures are showing various activities and approaches in FRIEND’s communities of Vanua Levu from this month. The FAO project will also secure the provision of solar dryers, water projects and further training in food and nutrition security and food preservation techniques.

FRIEND has been working with communities in the west and north to help prepare communities for disasters. Resource mapping,



looking at traditional coping mechanisms, food preservation methods and developing evacuation plans and making those operational were some of the activities being undertaken since late last year. Communities

affected by flood and soil erosion had started replanting their forests late last year.



There is a huge difference between **WANTING** to change & **BEING WILLING** to change. Almost everyone wants to change for the better. Very few are willing to take the steps necessary to create that change.

- John T Child



FRIEND staff doing the Bula Vinaka exercise



“Walk the talk” is scheduled for all FRIEND staff every Friday afternoon. JICA volunteer and fitness instructor Shoko Kai puts on some tunes and makes everyone move to her **Bula Vinaka exercises**. Although we think we already do move all day, during our weekly exercise sessions, we discover muscles that we normally don’t use but should. The movements are suited to all ages and fitness levels. The one hour session usually contains various fitness elements, such as balance, flexibility, strength and endurance.



JICA checks on FRIEND volunteers

New JICA volunteer coordinator for Fiji Mrs. Shimada Hiroko used the TC Winston aftermath not only to check on her 2 volunteers but at the same to introduce herself to FRIEND director and founder Sashi Kiran.



JICA volunteer Shoko Kai, FRIEND director Sashi Kiran, JICA volunteer coordinator Mrs Shimada Hiroko and JICA volunteer Yuri Minami.

Sashi resigns from FHRADC

The President of Fiji has accepted Sashi Kiran’s resignation from the Fiji Human Rights & Anti Discrimination Commission. Sashi tendered her resignation as a Commissioner in December. She was appointed to Commission last May by the Fiji Constitutional Commission.

New Valentine’s Card in Stock

Looking for something different for this’ years Valentine’s day? FRIEND’s dedicated cards team put together various materials to come up with new designs and shapes. The designs are put together on plain cards and also on recycled paper cards. The recycled paper is done in-house by the cards team and contributes highly to FRIEND’s recycle mission.



However, we are sure those cards come handy all year around.