



Takitaki

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5, FEBRUARY 2006

FRIEND STAFF ATTENDS INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING



FRIEND staff perform a role play during intercultural training.

The FRIEND staff ended 2005 by concentrating on training and teambuilding, and we began 2006 in the same mode. Last month we were fortunate to have a team from People for Intercultural Awareness (PIA) come to conduct a workshop for our staff. Our team is a diverse one, and though we interact with each other every day, there was still much we all had to learn about each other's cultures and intercultural experiences. Everyone on staff came with an open mind and a willingness to participate.

The PIA facilitators, Adi Vasu Chute, Elizabeth Krishna, and Fr Frank Hoare, took us through many different activities and exercises to raise our awareness of cultural differences and increase our sensitivity to cultural practices that may be different from our own. The role plays that the staff performed to illustrate difficult intercultural issues were particularly moving and valuable to our learning.

At the end of the workshop, each staff member shared their thoughts on the part of training that taught them something they didn't know before the workshop began. Each person may have come away enriched by a different aspect of the experience, but everyone was happy to have had the opportunity to attend the workshop and gain insight into others' cultures as well as their own.

THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

Three members of our Program staff, Nai, Devina and Louise, attended an excellent workshop provided by Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education & Advocacy (ECREA) in January. The workshop 'Theater of the Oppressed' was facilitated by Babu Ayindo, a Kenyan Arts and Peace Building Specialist.

The training provided an opportunity for the FRIEND Program staff to get to know each other a little more and revealed some excellent strategies that can be implemented in communities. Babu facilitated three days full of creative drama, theory based on Augusto Boal and healthy discussion on how the material can be utilized at the grassroots level.

The Program team have already implemented some of the strategies and they were well received. We look forward to continuing to work with the community as we put this approach into practice.

We thank ECREA for their invitation to the training.



ADB PRO-POOR BUDGETING WORKSHOP



Budgeting team members facilitate a session in Vatulaulau.

The Pro-poor Participatory Budgeting workshop took place at Rakiraki Hotel in June 2005. Topics in the workshop included personal budgets, national budgets, economy, human rights, democracy and governance. FRIEND was one of two NGO's trained on how to take this program into communities. The facilitators would work with seven FRIEND Save Scheme communities in Ba for this pilot project funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB) through Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSPI).

The journey for the FRIEND team began after the workshop. First, a budget was drawn up and they set their plan of when to cover individual topics in each of the seven communities. In order to work in these communities, the Save Scheme group leaders were contacted for permission to conduct the budgeting sessions. In villages, the Turaga ni koros were contacted for permission by the Save Scheme field officer and presented with sevusevu. Using the training manual, the facilitators made the session plans for each community visit. These plans were modified as the trainers observed what activities did and didn't work in the sessions. The facilitators were faced with many challenges, such as difficulties with communication and scheduling problems, as they proceeded with the program through the end of last year. In 2006, they will take their lessons learnt to continue to improve the budgeting program in the communities.

PEACE YOUTH CAMP

The first ever Peace Youth Camp, organised by ECREA, was held last month at Deuba Christian Centre. *Umoja*—the spirit of togetherness—was the feeling in the air as 30 youths of different ethnic backgrounds, from all parts of Fiji, gathered for the three-day workshop. The camp provided the young people an opportunity for capacity building as emerging leaders of today and tomorrow. They had the chance to share ideas with other youths and create a vision of how they would like Fiji to be in 2050.

The main facilitator was Babu Ayindo, Arts and Peace Building Specialist, from Kenya. He came with wisdom, knowledge and skills in non-violent conflict resolution to share with the youths. The camp was officially opened by Hon Jose Ramos Horta, Noble Peace Laureate, who gave a message of the importance of education to young people. His exact words were, “study, study, and study”. The second day was very exciting, as the campers were addressed by the acting president of Fiji, Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, who reminded them not to be influenced by anyone. The camp was stimulating and educational as the youths learned a lot in terms of resolving conflicts and building peace by means of the arts. It ended with a talent show and certificate of participation awarded by the coordinator of the peace programme at ECREA. As the youth prepared to leave camp they were given a final message from Babu Ayindo, “We all are born different and we should accept failure with grace but learn from it. Moce mada i Deuba.”



MURAL MANIA!



The front columns at the FRIEND compound got the artistic treatment as part of the mural painting workshop held here last month. Guided by artist, Tanya Paton, the youths involved had good fun and learned a lot.

WELCOME TO FRIEND

Fanny Ena*Marketing Coordinator*

Fanny comes to us with many years of media experience, most recently as Bureau Chief West for The Fiji Sun. Her move to FRIEND fulfills a wish to do work that is community-based.

**Zeaba Rahiman**
Accounts Manager

Zeaba will be holding the purse strings at FRIEND and is well qualified for the challenge. She has worked for several years as an accountant and is a USP graduate with a degree in Accounting & Financial Management and Information Systems.

What's Happening?

February 6
Waitangi Day
(New Zealand)

February 14
Valentine's Day ?

February 21
International
Mother Language
Day

IN MY OWN WORDS: CONDUCTING A SURVEY FOR USP

Three other people and myself went around Lautoka to do a household survey on migration for USP. First, we were given some questionnaires and told to study them, so we would get a fair idea of what we all were doing. For me, as a professional experience, it was good getting the questionnaires filled and finding out about our people, their household problems and why they might leave Fiji to go overseas. For some who responded, the survey was just a matter of giving quick answers (we were not even offered a glass of water by some of the interviewees), but for us who were going around interviewing it was very important to get the right information for future use.

If I look at my personal experience, it was more than getting a questionnaire filled. It was about sitting with the people and actually listening to what they had to say about their family, community, and the country as a whole. Some of them even cried while telling me stories of personal tragedies. As an interviewer, I felt so helpless that I could not do much for them but sit, talk, and share their feelings.

The purpose of this survey was to find out why people migrate from Fiji to locations overseas, or from one location to another in Fiji, and also to find out what changes can be made to improve our standard of living and make Fiji a better place to stay.



Swasnika Devi is a FRIEND volunteer