



Takitaki

EMERGING PACIFIC LEADERS DIALOGUE



QC Officer, Zeenat, talks with a group of Emerging Pacific Leaders.

A group who came to Fiji with the Emerging Pacific Leaders Dialogue (EPLD) paid a visit to FRIEND on the 3rd of July. The purpose of their visit was to learn more about community based non-government organizations. Twelve emerging leaders came and spent two hours at FRIEND, interacting with the staff and learning about our programs.

After a presentation by the staff about the work carried out at FRIEND, the visitors had a tour of our facilities, including the card making area and the Lautoka kitchen. The group was impressed with the kitchen and the idea of using natural resources to make products that allowed many community people to generate an income. The Deaf card-making project also attracted a lot of attention and the group complimented the Art Supervisor on her hard work and creative ideas. They appreciated that this project gave the Deaf youths a chance to earn a living.

During the morning tea, the emerging leaders were able to interact with the staff in small groups and ask questions about the details of each program. This session was a helpful one. The participants of the EPLD were able to learn about some of the challenges and limitations of community programs and share their ideas and knowledge to assist and improve upon what we are doing.

After about an hour of interaction with the staff, the group left for their next destination, but not before buying some of our products and presenting FRIEND with a certificate from the EPLD commemorating their visit.

THE THIRD ASIA PACIFIC MEDIATION FORUM

The 3rd Asia Pacific Mediation Forum was held recently in Suva. Three FRIEND staff were sponsored to attend the two-week event. The first week of the Forum was a workshop in community-based mediation processes, concepts and skills. Participants received training in how to work with parties in conflict to help them change the quality of their interaction and discuss possibilities for resolution.

The second week of the forum combined two days of workshops with a three-day conference. Many workshops dealing with aspects of the mediation process were offered. One example was a workshop on listening—the most basic and powerful way to connect to another person. This is a concept at the heart of dialogue, so the workshop was a wonderful opportunity to develop a skill critical to the mediation process.

Each morning of the conference began with a plenary session and a speaker who addressed a different form of mediation. Some participants were also encouraged to share cultural experiences and discussed the dos and don'ts of merging pacific cultural behaviors with the western process of mediation. This activity was an eye opener and lead to broader understanding of cultural factors and their impact on mediation.

The Forum was a great occasion for learning. The speakers and facilitators motivated and encouraged participants, allowing them to explore the mediation process, see its challenges and discover how a mediator can overcome them with character, a good attitude, time and leadership.

What's Happening?

August

- 9 Int'l Day of the World's Indigenous People
- 12 Int'l Youth Day

THANKS EU!



For the foreseeable future, when the FRIEND staff uses stationeries or office supplies, we will all be reminded of the generosity of the European Union.

Upon completing their Election Observation Mission in Fiji, the EU team found that they were left with a large quantity of stationeries. They decided that these supplies should be donated to a local organization. Fortunately for us, FRIEND was selected to receive this gift.

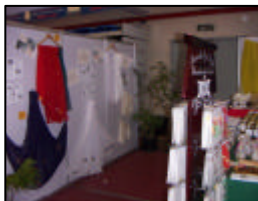
The quantities of paper, markers, whiteboards, files, staplers, etc. that we received was unexpected and a bit overwhelming, but all will be put to good use in our office. We are very grateful to the EU for their support of our work toward poverty alleviation.

SHOWCASE

FRIEND participated in the Suva Showcase held this month, thanks to the generous sponsorship of Communications Fiji Ltd. for the second year. During the week-long event we got the word



out about FRIEND and our programs, and enjoyed healthy sales of our IGP products. For those of you who had a chance to visit Showcase this year, we hope you were able to come and see us there. If not, we invite you to visit us and browse through our merchandise at FRIEND's FIJI STYLE, our shop at 154 Toorak Road in Suva.



WELCOME JONE

Join us in welcoming a new addition to our FRIEND staff. **Jone Nawaikula** started as our Receptionist/Office Manager last month. He is a graduate of USP and comes to us with lots of wonderful experience gained from his years of work in the tourism industry. We began to feel the benefits of his presence here immediately, and you have as well if you have called or visited FRIEND in the last few weeks and had the pleasure of a greeting from Jone. His organizational skills will continue to get a workout as he helps get our office in order, so wish him luck!

YOUTH ON THE MOVE

Though still in its early stages of life, the FRIEND Youth Development Program has quickly become a very active and dynamic addition to our organization. A few of the latest happenings from the program are highlighted below.

YOUNG ORATORS SPEAK OUT

The young people of Fiji live in an exciting time. Technology and development are making the world more accessible, providing new means of entertainment, and creating a more enticing social scene. With all of this change however, our young people are facing increasing worries. At the recent Youth Oratory Contest hosted by FRIEND and USP Lautoka Campus, participants from four Lautoka high schools voiced their opinions about 'Challenges and Concerns Facing Modern Youth.'

Unemployment, a lack of sex education in high schools, substance abuse and peer pressure were just some of the issues raised by representatives of Natabua High School, Jasper Williams High School, Tilak High School and Drasa Secondary School. FRIEND thanks the orators for the confidence and courage they displayed in speaking openly about their concerns. The winner, Liliwiwa Waqa from Jasper Williams High School explained her concern at the lack of jobs available in Fiji even for tertiary qualified people. She encouraged young people to work at home and use the land and natural resources around them to create income.

All of the orators noted that the lack of sex education in high schools is causing major problems within the youth community including the transmission of STIs/HIV and AIDS, teenage pregnancy, rape and abortion. One way FRIEND is responding to this concern is by organizing an Adolescent Reproductive Health workshop for youth in Lautoka. The workshop aims to provide a safe place for young people to learn more about their own bodies and the issues around being sexually active. The next FRIEND/USP Lautoka Campus Youth Seminar will be held on August 12th and will focus on the topic of Youth Leadership.



Youth Program Officer, Trish, talks with youths at the oratory contest.

THE YAC ATTRACTS ATTENTION FROM AUSSIE RADIO

Isabelle Genoux, host of the show "In the Loop" on Radio Australia, did a live segment in June on the formation of the FRIEND Youth Advisory Council (YAC).

The YAC is a group of concerned young people that guides the activities of our Youth Development Program. Ms. Genoux came across an item about the YAC in the Fiji Times Online and thought it would be an interesting story to share with other young people across the region. The piece was a very relaxed chat about the YAC and the opportunities available for young people in Fiji. Ms. Genoux agreed that problems faced by youths in this country, such as lack of self esteem and unemployment, are major problems for youth worldwide. She encouraged youths to share and exchange ideas, commenting that, "Great things happen when exchanging of ideas takes place."

**YOUTH BRING JOY TO HOSPITAL WARD**

Youths and FRIEND staff visiting the Lautoka Hospital Children's Ward.

The Children's Ward at Lautoka Hospital was abuzz with activities on a recent Saturday as youths working with the Youth Development program at FRIEND staged sing-a-longs, magic tricks, coloring, and storytelling for the patients. There was limited time for the visit, so the youths moved rapidly from one patient to another, engaging in conversation and getting the children's attention. Ranging in age from 6 months to 15 years old, the children were surprised by the unexpected visit and were absolutely delighted by the youths' performances—the ward was ringing with their laughter. The parents of the children were amazed by the caring ways and questions of the concerned youths regarding the children. Some of the nurses joined in the singing and felt it was very thoughtful of the youths to have such consideration for their community. As the youths left, they were reminded to visit again. They said their goodbyes, eagerly looking forward to another day at work in the community.