



# Takitaki

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## OUR DELEGATE TO THE CIVICUS WORLD ASSEMBLY



Devina in Scotland

I was a delegate to the 7<sup>th</sup> Civicus World Assembly in Glasgow, Scotland. Wow! There were 1000 delegates from NGOs and other stakeholders. The workshops and plenaries were amazing. It was great learning from the gurus of civil society.

The most thrilling part of the conference was the gala awards night, when I accepted the Civicus Nelson Mandela Graça Machel Innovations award on behalf of FRIEND. FRIEND was one of three winners of the innovations award, for which we submitted a proposal on our Youth Employment Network project last year.

It was an awesome occasion when I was called to receive the award in the presence of 1000 people. There was applause from the crowd as people stood up to cheer for me and were calling out "Fiji!" It was a very special

moment. Though it was not the Academy Awards, I was made to feel I was receiving an Oscar. Ha! Ha!

The trip was the experience of a lifetime. I also got an opportunity voice my concerns in the final plenary session which was on environmental sustainability. Speaking in front of 1000 people was not easy task, but when you are passionate about something, nothing can stop you.

I salute all those who are fighting for a just world and those have dedicated their lives in making other peoples lives better.

—Devina Devi

## PROMOTING NON-VIOLENCE FOR CHILDREN

Save the Children Fiji organized a two-day workshop at Waterfront Hotel, Lautoka on the theme "Promoting Non-Violent Upbringing and Education of Children". Generally, its focus was on awareness building on the rights of the child as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 19, where the child is guaranteed the right to be protected from harm. We looked at physical and emotional violence and considered its psychological and relational dimensions, its impact on the emotional bonds and social interactions of a child and how this affects his/her psychological and physiological development.

This workshop was particularly relevant given the pervasive and casual acceptance of violence against children in our society. This we observe and even experience ourselves through physical punishment used as a form of discipline. All involved suffer from the negative impact of violent behaviour and being able to identify this and its causes would be a positive step towards meaningful conflict resolutions, and in turn a healthy individual, family, community and society.

We looked at what we have learnt from this workshop and discussed how we can apply that knowledge in a practical way to our organization's work. We can include conflict resolution strategies in our programmes or organize separate and specific sessions for non-violent child rearing practices. Ultimately, FRIEND's role may be facilitative or simply one of identifying target groups for other organizations to continue work in this important issue.



## PASSING THE TAKITAKI TORCH



Lori Banks

In August of 2005 when I arrived at FRIEND I had few expectations about what I would be doing for the next two years. (The one thing I mastered from my ten weeks of Peace Corps training: Don't have expectations!) So, I was ready to go with the flow and do whatever was needed. Of course, what I thought was needed and what my new colleagues thought was needed didn't always agree! However, as I learned more about the culture of Fiji, NGOs and FRIEND in particular, I found my niche here.

One of my first accomplishments was establishing the FRIEND newsletter. I have been happily compiling, designing, editing and writing for *Takitaki* every month from October of 2005. It has been a welcome constant for me, and watching the issues stack up over the last year and a half or so has helped me mark the passing of my time here. I've enjoyed getting to know all the staff of FRIEND personally, and through their writing (or reluctance to do any!) and I'm especially proud of the record of FRIEND's work that now exists through the back issues of *Takitaki*.

Two years has gone too quickly, and my time here at FRIEND will close on 13 July. I'll leave the newsletter in good hands, and look forward to seeing it in my email every month. Thanks to all of you who have sent supportive comments and to the rest of you, thanks for reading.

—Lori Banks

**AUSAID HELPS MAKE DREAM KITCHEN A REALITY**

Australian High Commissioner James Batley (far right) visits the FRIEND kitchen

There are many producers who want to join in the production of *FRIEND's Fiji Style*® chutneys and pickles and FRIEND has been aspiring to develop a model kitchen where people can be trained and more production can take place. This long-time dream can now become a reality with the approval of AusAID for a grant worth \$187,000 over a period of two years. The model kitchen, which will be built in Lautoka, will have jam, pickle and chutney production areas as well as collection, washing and storage areas. A bigger processing plant will increase the quantity of raw materials we buy from farmers as well as ensure increased incomes for producers and farmers.

AusAID has also contributed \$60,000 a year towards our core-funding for the last two years. In recognition of FRIEND's demonstrated track record of delivering programs, and administering and reporting on them on time, an additional \$30,000 has been provided for core-funding this year. The Government of Australia also funds the Restorative Education for Alternative Livelihood (REAL) program for rehabilitation of ex-offenders under the Fiji Australia Community Justice program. AusAID is the largest of FRIEND's donors and we thank the Government of Australia for enabling the work of FRIEND with much needed funds.

**What's Happening?****June**

- 17 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
- 20 World Refugee Day
- 23 UN Public Service Day
- 26 Int'l Day in Support of Victims of Torture

**July**

- 5 Int'l Day of Cooperatives
- 11 World Population Day

**CONSULTING ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

The Convention for the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is a United Nations international agreement on women's rights that Fiji had signed and promised to follow. It outlines principles, referred to as Articles, which all countries that signed it must follow. CEDAW asks to give women the same opportunities as men especially where culture plays a strong role.

We in Fiji have a strong cultural background in all our ethnic communities. Unfortunately for most of our communities, women's work is seen as less important as men's work. CEDAW recognizes this discrimination and asks the government to take measures to change or amend cultural behaviours and attitudes that encourage it. CEDAW does not take away men's rights. The CEDAW Consultation was organized by the Ministry of Women and Welfare. It was an information gathering exercise on whether the various rights guaranteed in CEDAW are actually being given to women. This will help the Ministry in writing their report to the CEDAW Committee in New York. The value of this consultation was having a forum that allowed the participants (which were women from various sectors of the community) to voice their views on how effective the government was in promoting CEDAW principles and how better to implement these principles. It remains to be seen however how this information is transferred into effective government policies. Linking ideas and theories to effective action is an elusive process in Fiji.

**FRIEND TAKES 2ND PLACE!**

Captain Oscar with the 2nd place trophy

Lautoka Business Houses staged a volleyball competition on Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June at the Multipurpose Court in which ten FRIEND Youth participated. There were quite a few business houses that also took part in this yearly event. According to Oscar, the captain of the team, the tournament was quite a breeze until they reached the finals against the FSC team. The FRIEND team fell to FSC and was awarded the runners-up trophy and prize-money. FRIEND has involved sports as an activity of empowerment for youths where they can use their talents in an area that Fiji loves best. It is seen that youth sports programs help young people engage in confidence building and socialization. Congratulations to the team on their second place finish!

**LEARNING TO ASSESS NEEDS**

FRIEND was invited to a five-day regional workshop in Nadi organized by SPC. The workshop was based on the Participatory Needs Assessment for Capacity Building in Extension (Pacific Islands). The participants learned to utilize various tools and methods like maps, transects, matrices and how to develop an action plan. The workshop was very informative and participatory, and as part of the practical activity we went to the youth training centre in Nasau, Sigatoka where we practiced all the tools with students. FRIEND was very fortunate to be part of this workshop. Many thanks to SPC for giving FRIEND the opportunity to attend and learn.

