



Takitaki

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WOMEN TAKING ON LEADERSHIP ROLES



Group of Koroipita women taking part in a FRIEND session.

FRIEND facilitated development in the Koroipita Rotary model town community by assisting them to identify their needs, resources and strengths using participatory methods. The group FRIEND worked with developed a community action plan, and so far they have achieved three goals set in their plan. As part of the program, participants went through various trainings and workshops. Since then the participants have taken up key roles as block leaders or being part of the community's decision making body the Koroipita Town Council. The participants were mainly women although we actively encouraged other groups so as to ensure a greater gender balance. Most of the participants have ventured into some sort of income generating projects on a very small scale while a few of them have found employment. This is one of many successful stories that are the result of FRIEND's programs. — Devina Devi

VISITORS FROM CETC

A group of women on a Fiji Tour from the South Pacific Commission visited FRIEND office late last month. Most participants were quite interested in our DESI program as they also dealt with income generating projects in their own countries. Takitaki correspondent Jone Nawaikula spoke to one of the participants Mele from Hfofoa Youth Group in Tonga.



Mele Hauofa from Tonga

J: What have you found informative on your tour of FRIEND?

M: Our countries are similar in culture, lifestyle and in natural resources. FRIEND has a lot of programs that is applicable to our communities. I am particularly interested in your PACE, Youth and DESI programs.

J: How do you think these programs could help in your communities?

M: PACE sounds like a program we could start in our communities particularly for our youths. Empowering them socially and building up their self esteem would be ideal. Your Youth Development program has a lot of activities which we can also apply back home. The natural resources that we have, such as tapa, coconut shells, pandanus, and seashells can be used to create local products that can be sold to the tourists and hotels.

J: What do you think of the organization as a whole?

M: Very productive and innovative with your handicraft ideas. You also have good programs that benefits the community.

MOCE LORI

It was really nice knowing you. U had always been a great help to me, whenever I needed u. U will definitely be missed by everybody. May the good Lord's blessings be with you always. Be well, do good work & keep in touch. "Keep Smiling". May your future be blessed. Wish u all the best for your wedding. Arpana & Madhu

You have been such a great help and assistance to all of us since the time you arrived in FRIEND. You have conducted staff trainings in such a simple way that it made sense to all of us. I will miss you so much. May God bless you. . Rekha

The sun rises from the east and sets in the west every day and it's the same thing everyday, but there will be no Lori again that will replace you when you are gone. Thanks for everything that you have taught me especially your kind heart, respect and understanding. It's sad to lose you, but I cannot stop that to happen. May the good Lord bless you with happiness and success in life? Vinaka Vakalevu to you. MOCE. Isoa



There is a saying, "Life is like a See- Saw, if you are Up, someone is carrying your weight". How true is this statement today, that as you part, I feel that you were carrying the load for all of us. Without you, life will be difficult but I am sure you will be always there when we need you again in future. All the best of luck and may God give you success in days ahead. Ravin

I still remember the day I walked into Sasli's office for my interview and you were sitting there with a very serious face that got me very nervous. Then you gave me your beautiful smile that gave me confident to speak right through the interview with Sasli & Atasi. Since that very day till now, you always inspire me in my work, and you have been a good role model, a helper in all areas of your expertise and a good, kind and loving friend. I will miss working with you but, I'm happy for you and your new life, JOIN THE CLUB!! God Bless. NAI.

Hey Ms. Banks,
You're the Bomb!
This workplace wouldn't be as explosive without you!
Have been great working with you especially the supply of information and wealth of advise. Let Fiji's winds of change always bend over and grant all your wishes. Missing you! Moce mada. J.

You were an inspiration to me. You were always there to share your knowledge with us and there were times when I was completely lost but you always had ideas, ways to guide us. Being patience is something I learned from you. Thank you. Lori. All the best.D.

Life is about cherishing the past, facing the present and moving ahead towards new milestones. Best wishes for your future Lori and may you always get the very best in life. Thank you so much for all your support and help. .Mala

Great to know Fiji is keeping you cos we need more people like you in our little corner of de world. Thank you for all your help and advice, all the best with the wedding preps. E

NADI ART WORKSHOP (4—6TH JULY)

As a self taught artist, attending the “Making a Living from your Art” workshop was a psychological boost to me. It opened up my mind in many ways. First was the great privilege of meeting other artists. This was my very first time to mingle with the people whom we shared the same passion with. All for the love of art. The three day workshop had prompted me to venture into other mediums and materials rather than relying on one. It also encouraged me to utilize the available natural materials. Reviving ancient designs and products is another thing I learnt because I feel that many had faded away mysteriously or are leaving our shores unnoticed. Of the numerous things I gained from that workshop, confidence in pricing my product was the most important of all particularly as that has been my major weakness. Now with every product I create to sell, I must always take into account the volume of labour and cost of materials absorbed in creating such unique product. I strongly believe that if the future allows us more workshops as such, Fiji’s very own artists will surely flourish around the globe.



Kini's artwork

Kiniviliame Vatu

What's Happening?

July

7 July International Day of Cooperatives

11 July World Population Day

August

9 August International Day of Worlds Indigenous People

12 August International Youth Day

REAFFIRMING OUR MDGS

The staff at FRIEND come together for an hour each Wednesday to discuss global issues that have bearing on their work in community development. The most recent session was a discussion on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and how FRIEND’s programs work towards achieving some of them. The Millennium Development Goals are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world’s development challenges. Of the eight, FRIEND staff identified three MDGs which bear directly on their community work. These are **MDG 1** (*Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*), **MDG 3** (*Promote gender equality and empower women*) and **MDG 7** (*Ensure environmental sustainability*). There was much debate on the indirect impact of our work which could also be counted towards achieving the other MDGs. These weekly sessions are important for FRIEND staff as they keep us informed of global developmental directions particularly when they are macro level reflections of our own goals.



LEARNING SIGN LANGUAGE

Last Saturday was another day for our sign language class at FRIEND’s Training Room. The participants were mostly youths, high school students and working people who came together every Saturday to learn sign language and the culture of the deaf community. The Deaf Community has difficulty communicating with the public; like bank tellers, the police, health and other service providers. The public is given the opportunity to help overcome this difficulty through sign language classes in which levels of sign language are taught throughout the year. In addition, we conduct Basic English Language Classes for the Deaf. These classes help to upgrade their English and provide them with opportunities for further education and subsequent jobs. These classes are particularly important for FRIEND staff given FRIEND’s close association with the deaf community. This association has given our staff an insight into the communication difficulties the deaf community constantly face and our societal responsibility to reduce them.



Sign Language students with their Trainer Siga at a Saturday class.

—*Jone Nawaikula*