



# Takitaki

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## LEARNING FROM "THE STRETCHER"



Viliame Satala with the REAL team



Jock Gillespie talks to the inmates

3rd year in running this year's REAL program started with an orientation event on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2008. The Chief Guest for the occasion was renowned local rugby hero Viliame Satala, who gave a motivational speech to the participants' of this year's program. Satala talked about his experiences saying that he was not always "the stretcher" as everyone sees and thinks of him today and shared that life was not always as good for him. He also had his fair share of troubles; nevertheless he was determined to make a change in his life. The sharing of his personal life was appreciated by all

especially the 2008 REAL program participants who listened with much interest and concentration. The REAL program's main focus is to encourage inmates to take responsibility for their actions, restore relationships and assist the inmates make action plans to reshape their lives when they are released. REAL team works with communities and their families to assist the men and monitor them once they are released. Jock Gillespie, Coordinator for the Australia/Fiji Community Justice Program in Lautoka, also attended and spoke on the practicalities of achieving set goals. The REAL program is being funded by Australia/Fiji Community Justice. *Ashna Shaleen*

## ATTACHMENT WITH MICROSOFT

During the month of May I spent 3 weeks at the Microsoft company shadowing Vice President Gerri Elliot as part of a mentorship program organized by Global Voices an NGO in partnership with Fortune Magazine and the State Department. My nomination by the US Ambassador Mr. Larry Dinger came as a surprise. The team at FRIEND was even more shocked when I was paired with my very dynamic mentor at Microsoft. The trip started with 3 days orientation in Washington DC sitting in discussions with women leaders in media, breakfast with Carly Fiorina former CEO of Hewlett Packard and author, leadership luncheons with women executives, sessions with academics at Georgetown University, a trip to the World Bank to meet Lead Gender Specialist, meeting with Senator Barbara Boxer and tours of the Capitol Hill, White House and the State Department. 36 other women from around the world were part of this program and during these 3 days we also got to know each other before each of us departed to different corporate mentors. I left for Seattle to Microsoft and my days ahead were already planned for me. I met my mentor Ms Gerri Elliot, a dynamic person, well loved and respected by her team and she spent some time with me daily while I was in Seattle and we got to discuss many issues.

After three days in Seattle at Microsoft headquarters I was off to Indonesia shadowing managers in their business meetings and attending Global Leaders Forum organized by Microsoft where Bill Gates and the President of Indonesia spoke. The following 8 days in Seattle again with many meetings and discussions with mentor. She was able to negotiate my attendance at high security meeting of top 100 Chief Executives from around the world. Known as the Microsoft CEO summit in Seattle I again heard Mr. Gates and other business leaders speak and deliberate on issues affecting the private sector. It was indeed interesting to hear how corporate think about the different challenges and issues facing the world today and how these impact their business. My last Saturday happened to be also a much awaited sunny day in Seattle and Ms Patricia Ryan,



operations manager took me to down town Seattle where we visited shops and tried marketing FRIEND's Fijistyle cards. Two shops bought the products on trial and we hope for some other markets in this area. In the evening Patti McMannis, PA to Gerri took me to see awesome acrobats Circe de Sollil. Sunday I flew back to Washington DC to see how Microsoft 'field' operations worked. Again the senior managers made time and slotted me in their meetings and just before flying to New York for the final leg of the program a meeting was organized for me to meet USAID in DC. All the mentees were abuzz with excitement when we met in New York again and shared their experiences. It wasn't over yet as we met more media and heard other powerful speakers before attending Fortune Most Powerful Women dinner with power executives before flying to our respective countries. Most of the mentees came from business background, only other person from NGO was a lady from Nigeria. It was a very interesting trip indeed which gave insights in business world as well as insights in leaders and leadership at different levels.

Sashi Kiran

## EMPOWERING WOMEN IN LAUTOKA



PACE program officer Mereani with Soqosoqo Vakamarama Vitogo/Yasawa representatives.

A series of workshop conducted by FRIEND's PACE program officer had finally reached Lautoka after sessions in Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki. Aiming to empower the community in planning of projects and goal setting, the workshop was an eye-opener for women who attended. The women consisting of members of the Soqosoqo Vakamarama in Vitogo and the Yasawa zones were very interested when they realized the workshop was conducted in the Fijian vernacular. Fijian language manuals made easier the flow of communication, ideas and the spirit to speak out freely on sensitive community issues and the informality of the whole training process was a plus. PACE program officer Mereani Lomavere noted that language has been a barrier to some community and women are reluctant to attend workshops that are conducted in the English Language because of their level of education. The response to the whole concept of the workshop was overwhelming as they requested for more workshops like this to be conducted in their own vernacular which they could easily understand and relate to.

### What's Happening?

- 5 June**  
World Environment Day
- 14 June**  
Red Cross Blood drive, Lautoka
- 16 June**  
Queens Birthday
- 21 June**  
FRIEND Annual General Meeting
- 28 June**  
KMPG/FRIEND Community service project.

## ALL ABOUT PROBATION AND COMMUNITY WORK SYSTEMS

I attended a 2 day workshop on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of May, 2008, organized by the Department of Women, Social Welfare & Housing. The workshop which was facilitated by David Evans of Australia/Fiji Justice and Social Welfare staff was on Probation and Community Work. We learnt about how Probation and Community Work Systems would operate and where it fits in with the Criminal System and the Court System. As potential supervisors, we were made to understand our roles and responsibilities clearly when supervising, counseling and assisting offenders. The workshop also allowed participants to build up their confidence in making decisions when supervising offenders. The workshop was a training forum for voluntary supervisors, who would work closely with the Department of Social Services and the Court System once Probation and Community Work System is put into practice here in Lautoka.



Program officer Ashna

## YOUTH VOLUNTEERS



From left Aarisha, Sonal, Kapil, Bhavish, Ryan, Kirtika and Amit.

## The Enthusiasm at Work!



**Job Well done!!** A group of Form 5 students from Natabua High School surprised FRIEND by offering to help around the office as part of their Duke of Edinburgh service. The students had to complete 15 hours of voluntary work and began by putting up the GCAP monument outside FRIEND's office. They also helped distribute flyers around Lautoka City for FRIEND's Mothers Day promotion. This group of enthusiastic students also got to learn much about FRIEND and its work towards poverty alleviation.