

Understanding Adult Education

Director of FRIEND Sashi Kiran was invited by ASPBAE to attend a workshop on 'Building a Shared Understanding of Quality Adult Education in the Asia Pacific' from 5-7 November, 2009 in Jakarta. Its important to be continually assessing ourselves and benchmarking though difficult is crucial for delivery of adult education. Following are excerpts from a paper on adult education bench marking.

International Benchmarks on Adult Literacy

Excerpts from paper presented by Mohammad Muntasim Tanvir, a staff of ASPBAE (Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education) at Workshop on 'Building a Shared Understanding of Quality Adult Education in the Asia Pacific' from 5-7 November, 2009 in Jakarta

The Purpose The benchmarks are designed to facilitate a more rigorous policy debate about literacy, especially with governments, funding agencies and practitioners.

BENCHMARK 1 Literacy is about the acquisition and use of reading, writing and numeracy skills, and thereby the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality. The goals of literacy programmes should reflect this understanding.

Benchmark 2 (Continuity of Learning)

Literacy should be seen as a continuous process that requires sustained learning and application.

There are no magic lines to cross from illiteracy into literacy. All policies and programmes should be designed to encourage sustained participation and to celebrate progressive achievement rather than focusing on one-off provision with a single end point.

BENCHMARK 3 (Governance) Governments have the lead responsibility in meeting the right to adult literacy and in providing leadership, policy frameworks, an enabling environment and resources. They should: ensure cooperation across all relevant ministries and linkages to all relevant development programs, work in systematic collaboration with experienced civil society organizations ensure linkages between all these agencies, especially at the local level, and ensure relevance to the issues in learners' lives by promoting the decentralization of budgets and of decision-making over curriculum, methods and materials.

BENCHMARK 4 (Evaluation) It is important to invest in ongoing feedback and evaluation mechanisms, data systematization and strategic research. The focus of evaluations should be on the practical application of what has been learnt and the impact on active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality.

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Good Leadership at FRIEND Hailed at a Regional Meet Pacific Leadership Development Network Consultative Meeting



Participants at the UNIFEM sponsored workshop in Suva

The 3rd Pacific Leadership Meeting was held at the University of the South Pacific on 10th-11th of November. The USP hosted Forum focused on the theme of Current practices of leadership in the Pacific that are sustaining our institutions/organizations, communities and environment – Pacific Cases.

Speakers from various various institutions shared on how leadership is carried out in their

Organisations, communities and societies. USP Academic Professor Vijay Naidu elaborated on Civil Society and NGO Leadership saying that many locally based NGO such as FRIEND have survived from a small organisation to what it is today. This shows good leadership in the organisation compared to some organisations who have been around for a long time but are now defunct because of bad leadership.

FRIEND YOUTH FACE reaches 12 schools so far...



Jessie, Rusi & Aggie of FACE Theatre

“No” says the chief, **“The servant says that it is a family curse that the people in his village do not live long”**

“Maybe the curse is ... to eat too much” says the wise man.

These lines are extracted from the play ‘No Escape’ that has been written by youths from FACE Theatre in order to educate young students about the importance of self managing their eating and exercise habits. It highlights the need to reduce junk food, oil and sugar and to avoid cigarettes and alcohol. The youth actors do this in a way that says that being healthy is awesome, you get to live a long time and may prevent tragedies like being admitted to hospital for diabetes or heart diseases. The play is funded by SPC’s small grants for projects that address the preven-



tion and control of Non - Communicable



Diseases. The most exciting part about this project is that the actors themselves have become knowledgeable about the impact of NCD’s in Fiji and are confident to share this knowledge with their audience. The 25 minute play capture the student audience to focus on the effects of lifestyle diseases and then the actors become facilitators of participatory activities to strategise staying healthy in Fiji.

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BENCHMARK 5 (Facilitator Payment) To retain facilitators it is important that they should be paid at least the equivalent of the minimum wage of a primary school teacher for all hours worked (including time for training, preparation and follow-up).

BENCHMARK 6 (Facilitator Recruitment and Development) Facilitators should be local people who receive substantial initial training and regular refresher training, as well as having ongoing opportunities for exchanges with other facilitators.

BENCHMARK 7 (Ratio and Timetable) There should be a ratio of at least one facilitator to 30 learners and at least one trainer/ supervisor to 15 learner groups (1 to 10 in remote areas), ensuring a minimum of one support visit per month. Programmes should have timetables that flexibly respond to the daily lives of learners but which provide for regular and sustained contact (eg twice a week for at least two years).

BENCHMARK 8 (Multilingualism) In multi-lingual contexts it is important at all stages that learners should be given an active choice about the language in which they learn.

BENCHMARK 9 (Participatory Methods) A wide range of participatory methods should be used in the learning process to ensure active engagement of learners and relevance to their lives.

BENCHMARK 10 (Literate Environment) Governments should take responsibility to stimulate the market for production and distribution of a wide variety of materials suitable for new readers.

BENCHMARK 11 (Cost per Learner) A good quality literacy program that respects all these benchmarks is likely to cost between US\$50 and US\$100 per learner per year for at least three years .

BENCHMARK 12 (Financing) Governments should dedicate at least 3% of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy programs as conceived in these benchmarks. Where governments deliver on this international donors should fill any remaining resource gaps (e.g. through including adult literacy in the Fast Track Initiative)

USING THE BENCHMARKS These benchmarks are designed to help governments who are committed to developing adult literacy programmes. They do not themselves aim to convert or convince sceptics – although the case for investing in adult literacy does come through. They aim to provide a framework for policy debate. They touch concisely on critical issues that need to be considered in designing an adult literacy programme. The benchmarks might also be used as a checklist against which a government or donor might ask questions about an existing or new programme

Benchmarking: Caution!! These benchmarks should not be used as a set of conditions to be imposed on programmes. They should not be used to constrain or limit programmes. There may be contextual factors that justify deviation from these benchmarks. The intention would be to ensure that such contextual factors are manifested clearly in a dialogue that uses these benchmarks as the starting point. The benchmarks are not an end-point in themselves. This is particularly important in the context of adult education sector where flexibility is often key and standardisation can be a problem. It is this very fear that has perhaps prevented this sort of exercise from being conducted before.

Attributes of Good AE Benchmarks They should be clearly defined, (cont’d page 3)



On the occasion of World Food Day this year, Ms Marica Nenewa of Vunato was invited by FRIEND to be one of the speakers at the Nasoata community.

"I really appreciate what FRIEND has done to me, my family and my community. At FRIEND's first visit, I found it very interesting. After that session 7 ladies and I actually got down to doing the work in our gardens. I sell flowers during Environment week, but this event is yearly and for one whole year of looking after my pot plants, I get \$700 to \$800.00.

With assistance from FRIEND I am able to give my family healthy, fresh food from my garden and earn money from my garden as well. At the moment I am selling cabbage, lettuce, capsicum, chillies, cassava, rourou, baigani and flowers.

I am very grateful to FRIEND for helping Vunato, finding our way out to be able to help

ourselves, familiarizing ourselves with our surroundings, help us identify our resources which we always neglected and making a living out of it.

I have benefitted in so many ways, FRIEND continues to do follow ups with us and I have faith that Vunato will achieve our goals that we have in our action plan. Let me challenge you ladies in Nasoata, one day, Vunato will invite you to come over and see our gardens and you can do the same for us in return. We work in each other's gardens every Wednesday and we continue to thrive in the activities that we are doing in our communities with the help of FRIEND. FRIEND has empowered us to take up initiatives to lift ourselves out of poverty. I pray that God give us the courage to step out, change and lift our standard of living. Vinaka"

Marica's Gardens



Recipe Corner - Quick Pasta Fiji Style

Ingredients: 2 cups pasta, 1 can chopped tomatoes, 1/2 cup Fire sauce (tomato sauce mixed with a teaspoon of Friends Fiji Style® Chilli Pickle), 2 Table-



spoons olive oil, 1 onion, chopped, 1 eggplant (cubed), 2 cloves garlic, 1 cup Pizza Cheese.

Method: Prepare pasta according to package directions. Drain and set aside. Heat oil in medium hot skillet. Add onions. Cook for about 5-8 minutes, turning frequently with a metal or plastic spatula, until onions are soft. Add garlic and cook for just a minute. Add mushrooms and toss mixture with spatula until mushrooms cook down. Add can tomatoes and fire sauce, and stir to combine with vegetables. Bring mixture to a low boil and cook on medium heat until the sauce thickens, for about 10 minutes. Add grated cheese and heat thoroughly. Add drained pasta and toss gently to combine it with the sauce.

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be small in numbers evidenced based, Room for differentiation and contextualization, Combination of qualitative and quantitative benchmark, policy relevant, need to have synergies with MDGs processes.

Areas to Consider for AE Benchmarking

Policy, Budget and financing, Structures, Monitoring and evaluation (including data collection), Participation, Outcomes, Partnerships.

The process:

In 2004-5, GCE and Action Aid decided to develop a set of international benchmarks, which intentionally coincided with UNESCO GMR 2006 on Literacy.

100 key informants from government, donors, NGOs and academia identified good quality adult literacy programmes around the world.⁶⁷ of these adult literacy programmes across **35 countries** (between them reaching 4 million learners), completed a detailed survey. A group of 10 experts then analysed the outcomes and drew up a list of proposed benchmarks. These benchmarks were then circulated to all respondents for verification and comment. Final revisions were then made to the benchmarks based on the feedback from **142 respondents in 47 countries** and encapsulated in a report called 'Writing the Wrongs'. (end)



A Song by FRIEND Youth to promote healthy living



Friend's Fiji Style Shop
For gifts this Xmas!

Chorus (x2):

Change your life
Exercise
Discover what is right
A healthy style
Will make you smile
It's what you put inside!

Verse 1: No more oily foods
Take in lots of fruits
Too much sugar
It's not safe for you

Veggies grown at home
That's your very own
You don't need junk food
Mix your mango juice!
<Chorus>

Verse 2: We live life just once
This is your only chance
No more smoke
and now more drink
Life will still be fun

The above song is composed by FACE theatre actors. FACE stands for FRIEND Art and Cultural Enterprises. It is a youth empowerment program working with young people from underserved communities in recognition of their talents in arts, theatre and music.



*Ravi & Pene
ready for service with a smile*

Hands up!!! If you haven't had a chance to visit our Specialty Shop at Garden City in Suva yet. Hidden next to the flower ladies in Raiwaqa this tiny little space in the world has an assortment of items made by various talents from around the country.

While the shop has all of Friend's Fiji Style chutneys, pickles, jams and handmade cards that can be found in most leading outlets around Fiji, it also has a delightful range of food and craft items that we at FRIEND call 'still under trial'.

These include various homemade recipes of food products like satwa, khatai chutney, kadwadu (the dried fish delicacy) and tomato relish. You will also find crafts items like paper, bead and shell jewellery, recycled paper photo frames and works of art by a range of entrepreneurs.

And should you wish for a specially prepared Xmas hamper of products of your choice from our range of goods, it can also be put together by your friends at FRIEND. Place your orders today. And don't forget to buy a Friend's Fiji Style Handcrafted card for your special greeting for Xmas 2009!

Seasons



Greetings

