



FRIEND

Takitaki

Disadvantaged Youths Receive Training for Better Employment Opportunities

In an effort to support youths in gaining employment and working towards poverty alleviation, FRIEND Youth Employment Network (YEN) Program, held its first intensive training for unemployed youths from 8th – 12th February for 2010. This initiative, under the umbrella of the Youth Development Program, focuses on basic communication skills, etiquette and work culture. YEN has received a Nelson Mandela Graca Machel Award and is recognized as a credible program working towards youth empowerment.

It is recognized that many youths lack confidence and motivation and are in danger of joining the growing numbers of unemployed and poor in Fiji. This program represents an attempt to support youths in gaining work experience. Another key part of the program is to seek mentorship from corporate organizations, in the hope that corporate leaders could help to develop the leaders of tomorrow.

Through the provision of quality training and connecting young people directly with the business and working environment, FRIEND believes that YEN is a step forward in assisting our youths on the path to becoming self-sufficient for their future.

15 young people underwent 5 days of training at FRIEND in job search strategies, presentation skills, public speaking and communication skills and a one-to-one interview practice session.

The next YEN training sessions are scheduled for June and October.

By Jone Nawaikula



Youths Actively Participating in the training

FRIEND Hosts Stakeholders Forum in Labasa

On the 25th of February at Macuata House, Labasa, FRIEND hosted a stakeholders' conference with Diane Goodwillie, who conducted a UNIFEM baseline study on the capacity of agencies for eliminating violence against women (EVAW). Diane is a consultant who has considerable experience with women's groups and small grant funding in the Pacific region and had requested FRIEND to organise a meeting for the study.

The study gathered information on agencies' access to funding, training, technical assistance and their general understanding of the EVAW issues facing the Pacific. The study also looked at the capacity of agencies to design and manage funding projects, share success stories and do advocacy for EVAW, as well as how to change attitudes in the communities, problems and opportunities to strengthen EVAW and the experiences of implementing activities in the communities.

Stakeholders involved in moving the Labasa community towards a safer and violence free society for women and children included representatives from the Ministry of Women, Methodist Church, New Life Church (Pentecostal), Community Police Unit, Sexual Offence Unit, Labasa Women's Forum, USP students, community women's groups, DO's office and social welfare.

According to one of the participants, the meeting provided a good networking opportunity to share their views and ensure leaders hear their voices on the issue. Everyone agreed the VAW is a problem and that more needs to be done, particularly with regards to economic and social empowerment.

By Milli Tikoi

February Parties at FRIEND



Jessica's Farewell



Riga & Collette
New team members



Sunita's Birthday



Sashi's Birthday

Happy International Women's Day



International Women's Day remains an important reminder of disadvantaged women globally, as well as a marker of women's progress in society. IWD is an opportunity to reflect on changes still to come and the need for continued activism in representing the interests of women around the world.

Further developments in relation to gender-based inequalities and a positive change to women's status will come, in part by acceptance of women as leaders – leaders

with the power to effect change in all societies.

This a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. The first IWD was held in 1911.

Fiji ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women in 1995, but progress has been limited in implementing its provisions. Key areas of concern to all women in Fiji include poverty, discrimination in the labour market and gender-based violence.

FRIEND works with underserved rural and marginalized communities in the west and north of Fiji and more than 75% of FRIEND beneficiaries are women. These women are taking leading roles in the development of their communities and looking after their families. FRIEND wishes to acknowledge and congratulate these women for their continued perseverance in taking positives steps for the benefit of themselves and those around them.

At FRIEND this year we would like to dedicate the day to the founder of the organization for her visionary leadership.



Ms Sashi Kiran

Happy International Women's Day



Asia Pacific Community Radio Broadcasters call for placing communication rights at the centre of development

Over 300 delegates, including community broadcasters, activists, academics, and representatives of NGOs, governmental and multilateral institutions, from 20 countries in the Asia Pacific region have demanded that people's communications rights be placed at the centre of development.

The declaration was issued at the conclusion of the regional assembly of community radio broadcasters, held in Bangalore, India in February and organized by the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, AMARC, in collaboration with VOICE, India.

The assembly called for initiatives that aid access to digital and other technological opportunities to enable community broadcasting on an ever-widening scale. It also demanded that space be created on the airwaves for diverse voices and reaffirmed the need for oppressed and marginalized communities to take control of their own means of communication.

The 2nd AMARC Asia Pacific Conference has committed to building alliances with grassroots and human rights movements for strengthening communities and the community radio movement. The conference has also called for further recognition for community radio as a tool for disaster preparation, poverty reduction, inclusion, human rights, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

*By Sandhya Narayan
From Bangalore India
26 Feb 2010*

Visit with Farmers in Labasa



Team getting ready to cross the river to meet with farmers from Dreketi

There have been numerous requests from the farmers of the northern division for marketing support. In letters and telephone calls to our office farmers have been saying that they have resources yet are unable to use these to improve their economic situation.

So FRIEND Director Sashi Kiran, Income Generation Program Manager Nilesjni Sekar and the team from Labasa set out to meet farmers. Those that had been in contact with the office were asked to invite nearby farmers and producers to meet with the team. We had constructive meetings with two groups of women and men ready to take initiative if the market was guaranteed. To reach one of the groups we had to cross the deepest river in Fiji, Dreketi River, in a small paddling canoe. Staff braved the experience and found 12 families across the river living off copra production. They have an abundance of land to plant. Farmers in Bua also have an abundance of land, yet need advice on producing marketable products.

Due to high courier costs from the North and the transportation difficulties associated with marketing perishable goods, farmers were asked to focus on dried items. Fiji imports many types of lentils in large quantities, which could be easily grown in Fiji. The farmers indicated this could certainly be possible if there was market for them. Other items that farmers would be prepared to dry and sell are turmeric and cinnamon sticks, which are both being imported at present. A large market also exists for dried chilies, which are currently imported into Fiji.

Fishermen were asked to look into the possibility of supplying large volumes of dried and smoked fish.

Farmers have committed to investigating the possibility of growing crops and will keep FRIEND informed so that the organisation can ensure timely supply to the market.

The Director emphasized the need for quality and consistency of products if farmers are serious about finding genuine markets.



Team with farmers from Nasorowaqa

FRIEND Initiates Composting in Communities

What comes to your mind when you hear the word composting? “Rubbish, reduce, recycle, reuse, manure, top soil”. These were some of the answers that the community members came up with.

Organic composting is a cheap and environmentally friendly practice that any community can achieve. Compost is a mixture of kitchen refuse, brown waste (dried grass, leaves) and green waste (grass clippings) that is broken down into nutrient-rich black soil over a period of time.

FRIEND encourages communities to practice composting in order to reduce waste, produce inexpensive nutrient-rich top soil for gardens and be able to sell the top soil for income generation.

Currently community members are actively involved in the construction of their composts. There are total of 17 composts running in two communities and more are in the process of building theirs.

Hint: if you are continuously adding to your pile, you may take soil from the bottom when it is ready and continue to add materials on the top. The top soil is usable when it turns into dark black soil.



Composts constructed by community members

Reported by: Aarti & Vive

STAND UP TAKE ACTION END POVERTY NOW!

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in an Era of Global Uncertainty: Asia-Pacific Regional Report 2009/10, estimates that the global economic crisis could trap an additional 21 million people on incomes of less than \$1.25 a day.

The report, produced and launched jointly by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), assesses the impact of the recent financial and economic crisis on MDG progress in the region. Prior to the crisis, the region had been making steady progress in a number of areas, including halving the proportion of people living below the \$1.25 a day poverty line.

Speaking at the launch of the report in Manila, Mr. Minar Pimple, the Regional Director for Asia and Pacific, UN Millennium Campaign said, "The economic and financial crisis has veered the MDG progress off track. We must look at this challenge as an opportunity to bring about long lasting policy corrections – social protection being one of them."

The crisis has exposed the vulnerabilities of the Asia-Pacific region, but it also presents an opportunity to address these and identify a more sustainable growth path conducive to the achievement of the MDGs.

The UN Millennium Campaign echoes the importance of challenging the existing export-led growth model, which has excluded many from the fruits of development and has contributed to widening disparities. Although the Asia-Pacific region has been experiencing a rapid urbanization, more than half of the population still live in the rural areas, many of whom rely on subsistence agriculture.

With less than six years left before the 2015 deadline for achieving the MDGs, the global economic crisis is a wake-up call for all the countries that the existing development model needs to be fundamentally reviewed.

<http://standagainstopoverty.org/>



Minar Pimple at FRIEND during his visit to Fiji last year

Senior Managers attend Training programs

Mereani Lomavere: Completing her Post Grad Diploma with APTC in Health and Community welfare .

Sandhya Narayan: attending UNIFEM sponsored internship with ISIS International headquarters based in Manila. During this period she also attended the 3 day assembly of AMARC Asia Pacific.

Nileshni Sekar: attending a regional facilitators course in Bogor Indonesia with ASPBAE.

Recipe Corner

Cassava Flour Tempura

Ingredients: A Selection of fresh vegetables like egg plant, okra, green chilies, sliced potatoes etc.

Half a cup of *Friend's Fiji Style*® Cassava Flour

Method:

Wash, dry, slice your vegetables of choice for frying.

Prepare a thin consistency batter from *Friend's Fiji Style*® Cassava Flour, salt and water.

Heat oil. Dip vegetables into the batter and fry until the batter is a light golden color.



Tempura is of Portuguese origin, and is a popular Japanese dish of seafood or vegetables that have been battered and deep fried.