



### DESI Conference III — Innovations for Sustainable Development



Close to 200 stakeholders gathered at Tuvu for our annual conference to share their stories and take inspiration from one another in yet another successful event for FRIEND. The stars of the day were many as each speaker from professionals to community members took the mike and willingly and boldly spoke from their hearts about their challenges and successes, moving all that were present. Chief Guest for the Day NZ AID Manager and Second Secretary Ms Ginny Chapman spoke about her passion for Development Work while Mr William Parkinson of Communication Fiji Limited reminisced about his days when as a young man he had dared to dream of opening and running a radio station and today is successful CEO of Communications Fiji Ltd owning 5 radio stations in Fiji as well as Papua New Guinea. Dr Animesh Sinha, founder and Medical Director of PRISM Health Initiative spoke about his dream of a happy and healthy world and how this program took shape.

In the community panel Ms Sainiana, Ms Lavenia, Ms Viniana and Turaga-ni-koro Josaia Rakoto all spoke of the changes in their life, their families and their communities after joining hands with FRIEND.

On the expert panel, Gold Foundaton's Ms Irene Kumar shared how her organization is supporting women out of poverty in Tavua, Nilesdni Sekar, IGP manager at FRIEND urged communities to think quality and consistency while a retired School teacher Mr Shiu Narayan relayed his ideas and shared new recycled product ideas based on his years of experience utilizing throwaway items from home.

The AGM 2009/2010 took place following the conference. The board members presented the annual report and audited accounts to the Forum. The meeting adopted resolutions from the Forum which included request by the communities for FRIEND to continue to provide support to Income generation program in the communities. The AGM was followed by the first community graduation for completion of coursework of FRIEND Governance Manual. Acting Director USP Lautoka Campus. Dr Pramila Devi presented certificates to the graduates. The "My Story" Competition allowed members of the community who could not be accommodated on the speakers panel, a chance to share their thoughts and experiences. Competition Coordinator Sandhya Narayan said FRIEND wants to showcase the achievements of the communities and these stories will be published in time to inspire and motivate others.

The Innovative Garden competition showed off community initiatives of putting together hanging gardens, table garden, composting and more. One of the major attractions of this was the Plants-in-Boots. The winners of these two competitions received cash prizes for their efforts.







Reading through the documents NZ Aid Manager  
Ginny Chapman and Sashi

## NZ AID Core Funding Signed

After months of waiting, the signing of the new core funding agreement between FRIEND and NZ AID took place this month.

NZ AID Second Secretary Ginny Chapman also graced the DESI convention as the Chief Guest and says FRIEND has shown impressive skills in innovation in a number of ways.

She went on to point these as identifying underserved and marginalized communities, establishing partnerships and building training needs of communities, identifying available resources and skills of communities to earn income and taking initiative to further develop and diversify food products in the market.

Ms Chapman said that there is a lot to learn from successful models such as this and try to inspire creativity on a local level, as well as all around the world, to encourage human talents to reach their potential.

The new agreement covers the funding arrangements for further two years.



## Making Noise for the MDG's

As the world leaders made their way to New York to discuss the progress and way forward for the Millennium Development Goals, FRIEND joined the Stand Up! Make Noise! Global campaign to call on the leaders to think and act responsibly. Around a 100 people gathered at the Music in the Park event organized by FRIEND in Lautoka on 18 September, 2010.

Meanwhile the meeting in New York has heard that while Asia and the Pacific has made strides in ensuring that all children have access to primary school and reducing HIV prevalence, among other successes, it is still home to two-thirds of the world's poor and hungry, with one in six people malnourished. It has also been slow to reduce child mortality and to improve maternal health.

And if the region stays on its current development track, by 2015, it will have nearly 35 million more people living in extreme income poverty; almost 900,000 additional malnourished children, 1.7 million births not attended by skilled professionals, and 70 million more people lacking access to improved sanitation

A new UN backed report says Asia-Pacific countries must enhance efforts to translate robust economic growth into progress towards the targets of slashing poverty and hunger.

According to *Paths to 2015 – MDG priorities in Asia and the Pacific*, jointly produced by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific the UN Development Programme and the Asian Development Bank, the number of people in the region living on less than \$1.25 a day has dropped from 1.5 billion in 1990 to just under 950 million in 2005, helping to drive global success in cutting poverty.



**A total of 1328 events in 74 Countries. We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. -- Millennium Declaration**

## Canada Fund for Income Generation Programs

FRIEND received a visit from the Canadian High Commissioner HE Caroline Chretien this month. The Canada Fund has approved funding for a pilot Income Generation Program in the North. FRIEND has been working on a number of initiatives in Labasa and surrounding areas after opening its office there a little over an year ago.

IGP Manager Nilesni Sekar says they have a number of projects ready to be launched and the funds will come in handy for that as well as providing skills trainings for those in need.

Canada Fund has been providing support with small project grants to FRIEND over the years.

Mereani, Sashi, Nilesni, High Commissioner C Chretien, Pamela Deacon & Leonie Smiley





**FRIEND Makes it's Mark at the Friendly North**



The Friendly North Festival provided a wonderful opportunity for FRIEND in Labasa to create awareness on the organization and its products. Those were proud moments for me when people would come to our stall and tell me of how they had heard or seen about FRIEND on TV, heard FRIEND on radio or had read about FRIEND in the newspapers.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of all our volunteers who helped us in carrying the boxes to and from the stall— Mereani L

**Friend's Fiji Style © Covers The Miles**



The vehicles donated by AUSAID to facilitate outreach and service delivery are also serving as vehicles to promote FRIEND products in the market. The van marked for sales now sport a range of the ever popular chutney and pickle bottles. This van is seen regularly on the road between Lautoka and Suva as the mar-

keting team endeavors in placing *Friend's Fiji Style ©* at strategic points.

**Diwali Greetings for 2010**



**Diwali Salties**

Back by popular demand! Special orders taken for Diwali this year for Saina Rolls and Murku. Don't forget to check out our special hand-crafted **Diwali Cards.**



Diwali photos 09



Happy Diwali!!!



**Active Citizenship—Clean up, Labasa Town**

The morning dawned nice and clear as I walked down to the civic center car park to meet the volunteers for the day. I could hear the birds singing and I knew that it was going to be a good day. It was only 6.30am and I was elated to see a small group of people already waiting to get started for the day. A total of seventeen people had registered for this activity The group managed to fill 20 garbage bags within an hour before the floats passed the Nasekula road for the Friendly North festival. The cleanup was made possible with the support by the Labasa Town Council, FRIEND and members from the Kidslink Club of Save the Children, Fiji.

Mereani Lomavere



**A Gift of A Stove**

"We have to make something sweet to initiate the stove", said Sashi as she walked in one morning with milk, nuts and dried fruits. Ba's Nagan Engineering Limited had delivered an olden style cast iron stove to FRIEND the evening before, a gift to mark the occasion of the opening of our new office. This was a 'welcome to Ba' gift to FRIEND by Anand Nagan, one of the directors of company, who believed we would find good use for the redesigned gadget that his company has been working on. The regal looking contraption stands on its own and uses only a little amount of firewood to finish the cooking. With much fuss



Mohinesh, Nilesjni & Sashi. The cooks that got it right

and ceremony the fire was lit and a pot mounted for kheer (Indian style rice pudding) to be cooked. While the stove is expected to come in very handy for the planned restaurant it has already been used atleast twice now, first for making the kheer and then cooking of savai (vermicelli) on the occasion of Eid earlier this month. Meanwhile Nagan Enginnering of Ba has also donated a n impressive looking front gate for FRIEND premises in Tuvu.

**Baked Eggplant with Tomato and Cheese**

**Ingredients** 1 large eggplant  
1 level teaspoon salt, 1 onion, peeled and sliced, 2 cloves chopped garlic  
1 tablespoon oil, 3 large ripe tomatoes, skinned and chopped, 1 cup water  
2 additional tablespoons oil , 10 fresh mint leaves, Flour for dipping, 1 cup grated mozzarella cheese



**Method** Slice the eggplant (unpeeled) and put into a dish with a little salt. To prepare fresh tomato sauce, fry onion and garlic in 1 table- spoon oil over a gentle heat until it's soft and glossy; allow at least 5 minutes to develop a good flavor. Add tomatoes and water, then simmer until it's reduced to a rich tomato sauce. Season to taste with pepper and a tiny pinch salt. Pour away all the dark juices from the eggplant, then rinse the salt from the slices in clean cold water and pat dry with paper towels. Dip the eggplant slices in flour then panfry gently in the additional oil. Arrange layers of eggplant, tomato sauce and mint in a shallow, oven- proof dish and finish with a layer of mozzarella cheese. Bake in a hot oven 400 F for about 20 minutes or until bubbling hot. (For those looking for an extra zest in their recipe add a teaspoon of *Friend's Fiji Style©* Chilli Chutney to the sauce)

By Sandhya Narayan





Peni & Medical Divisional Officer North Dr. Samuela Korovou

### From Cane Fields to the Health Ministry

As a young boy growing up in Labasa, Peni had always dreamed about becoming a Heart Surgeon. As a 23 year old he has to cut cane to support his family. After passing his Fiji Seventh Form Examination his dream was shattered as his father retired and Peni had to leave studies to financially support his younger siblings.

While being a Heart Surgeon maybe a long way away from his attachment as a volunteer with the Health Ministry, Yen believes the goal is nearer.

He shared his story during Youth Employment Network session where the participants had to draw their dreams and vocalize where they wanted to be in 5 years. "I am very excited and know that this will help me towards achieving my dream", says Peni.

### Sashi @ Leadership Fiji

FRIEND Director Sashi Kiran was invited by the organizers of the inaugural Annual Leadership Forum to speak on the panel in Lami.

In her speech she emphasized that with the 45 % poverty figure for the country, while people were able to eat, they were not able to send their children to school or get proper health services.

Kiran also said that social empowerment is important and they are looking at how to take opportunities to these people so that they are able to make use of the resources.

She said that while people may have the resources and the skills to get into a business, it is not easy for them to actually do it.



Sashi shows Head of Delegation Wiepke VAN DER GOOT and the EU group around the premises

### EU Head of delegation visits FRIEND

A pre-arranged Visit by senior members of the EU Delegation in Fiji as well as senior official from Brussels was a momentous occasion for FRIEND this month. The team was visiting the west as part of their assessment for alternative livelihoods in cane belt areas. The EU delegation was very interested in the work of FRIEND and took

### A Letter from MORDI to FRIEND

Dear FRIEND team,

I would like to thank you one and all for the excellent field trip and conference that you organized last week. It was very nice to come over and witness the good work that all of you are doing. It also provided an excellent opportunity to meet with and network with community members, donors and other stakeholders. I would like to suggest that if you have another workshop next year, please organize the field visit again. These field visits are a great source of new learning and inspiration. Talica and I are working on a trip report in which we will reflect on our visit and our observations & comments. Of particular interest to me was the home gardening projects that we visited. As I had remarked during the visit, this is a very important project that should and could be done at national level. I would like to encourage FRIEND to take lead in this and introduce the methods and techniques to the relevant government departments so that it can be done on a larger scale. MORDI would like to partner in this area in order to push for home gardening at national level.

Thanks again for the friendly FRIENDs and an excellent hospitality at Tuvu.

Best regards,  
Vikash

Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations (MORDI) is a program of a regional development NGO based in Suva

time to tour the premises.

The Head of Delegation HE Wiepke Van Der Goot said he was impressed with what FRIEND was doing with natural resources to find alternative livelihood for those living in the rural areas. They took time to enjoy the dried fruits and herbal tea preparations of FRIEND.



### Brotherly Support for the Good Doctor

Kislaya Sinha has just finished streamlining the administrative systems for the community health initiative PRISM headed by Dr Animesh Sinha, a US based Medical Practitioner. Arriving in the country a little more than two months ago, Kislaya, a New York banker by profession identified and implemented numerous measures to ensure a more efficient service delivery by PRISM.

"My brother is a self less servant and I wanted to help as well," says Kislaya. "I hope what I have put into place makes it easier for him and his team to do what they do best, that is help people with their medical expertise."

### Thanksgiving Tea

August spilled into September as the team recovered from the after effects of our opening function at Tuvu.

Anyone who attended the opening function at FRIEND agreed that the function went well from start to finish.

The hardworking team at FRIEND gathered for a thank you tea function on the following Monday.

And even we at FRIEND are continually amazed at the headcount when everyone comes together for functions like this—a far cry from the days of handful of volunteers and staff, not too long ago.

We look forward to another year of growth and prosperity at FRIEND.



The team chills out with cake and a cuppa



Jerry



Saras



Sis Prakash



Sandhya