



All about Impact



A challenge to volleyball!!! Healthy & Happy

her on her walks and lost around 10 kg since then. "In fact I have become so health conscious that I don't even eat meat any more." I feel happy and healthy, but when I look at my mom I worry a bit, she takes a lot of sugar with her tea, that cannot be healthy when we look at the threat of increasing lifestyle diseases."

49 year old Kiran says, "I have been an asthmatic since I was ten years old. Doctors would tell me to exercise but I didn't get around to it as I was shy of being seen to be doing so. After the session on the importance of exercise during the course however, I made up my mind to start walking anyway. Two days later one of my neighbors joined me. By the end of that week, four other ladies had joined us. Now, about two months down the line, there are twelve of us who walk for about an hour everyday. The group includes ladies, children and even men. If for some reason, I miss my walk, am always eager to get walking the next day. It feels good to be just out there and exercising."

53 year old Laisani was in tears as she remembered the day she had to be taken into hospital after Christmas 2010. She says while she learnt about the importance of eating fresh whole foods with FRIEND Governance Program last year, she was also advised by the PRISM team to go to hospital for further blood tests after detection of high sugar levels. But Laisani said she was too scared to go to the hospital and also dropped out of the Governance Program as she felt too 'madua' to face FRIEND or PRISM. Laisani says she realizes now that she nearly lost her life that day and since then has restarted her gardening to keep herself and her family healthy. Laisani says she also takes time for daily exercises and has lost some weight while gaining blood sugar control. She says she looks forward to her walks and has also turned fully vegetarian as well.

I believe I am more health conscious now than I ever was, says 16 year old Zaira. She has recently finished the FRIEND Governance program in her community, along with her mother. Zaira says she used to tip the scale at 65kg over four months ago, but with the help of learning's gleaned during the course, she has cut back on junk food and sugar, taken up regular exercise, managing to get even her grandmother to join

Muffins and Ice-Creams

Ana Vanika lives in a community, not too far away from Lautoka City. She classed herself as an

unemployed youth when she came forward to take advantage of the FRIEND Governance Training in her community last year. But Ana says now she calls herself a budding entrepreneur.

Taking inspiration from her learnings during the Income Generating Projects Module, Ana says, she decided to try out her cooking abilities to earn a few dollars.

She started making doughnuts and muffins for which she found a ready market within the community that now earns her upto \$50.00 a week on a regular basis.

She says occasionally she also gets orders from Sheraton Vomo Resort

for their staff functions, and this makes for additional income for her.

Ana proudly informs us that with her growing entrepreneurship skills she is also now investing in selling ice cream cones from her home. And at \$1.00 a cone she is able sell an average of around 70 cones per week to add to her income.

Most of her peers and children are her customers and they look forward to Ana's delicious delights.

Ana says apart from her income generation project that she uses to support her family, she has created vegetable plots of cabbage, chilies, bele, dhanian, bhindi and eggplants with weekly yields averaging 10 heaps of eggplant, 10 heaps of cabbage, 11 bundles of dhanian, 4 heaps of chillies and 3 bundles of bele.

She says with her newfound entrepreneur skills she would like to be able to sell her vegetables to add to her purse, but on her moms urging she is happy to give away any excess from the garden to her friends and neighbors within the community, knowing she is able to contribute to their healthy diets.

Untapped Talent

"This is too hard, my hands are rough I can't do it" This is what we heard from Shyamal Narayan a 30 year old Deaf on the first day when he joined FRIEND's Card Project, about three months ago. The card making team including four other Deaf girls assured Shyamal that with little bit of patience and creativity he could produce magnificent designs. The whole team supported him and in no time he started churning out beautiful cards. His expertise is in using iris folding technique to design sports, birthday and musical themes on cards; he has been able to make beautiful trains, sports T-shirts and guitars. Shyamal has gained so much confidence that he is now guiding new team members.

With the income earned from making cards Shyamal is able to spend on his basic necessities as well as save whatever is left. Joining the card project has provided him with income as well as has boosted his self esteem. Apart from him benefiting from the project he is now trying to teach sign language to all FRIEND staff.

When staff try to converse with him using signals and by writing, he shows them the correct way signing the words.



Governance Survey Underway

It is nearly a year since the launch of the FRIEND Governance Community Development Manual. The manual was launched on 8th of March last year on the occasion of the International Women's Day. Since then, in the Western Division alone, around 200 participants from 11 communities have taken advantage of the program.

To access the efficacy of the program, our field officers are now in the process of getting a survey questionnaire filled. The questionnaire has been designed with expert assistance from University of the South Pacific.

The survey is an attempt to gauge the impact of the Community Development Course on the livelihoods of the participants, their families and their communities.

"Each questionnaire takes a minimum of two hours per participant. Some require more time and we have spent up to three hours with some people," says Rigamoto Sakopo, Programs Administrator.

"Once the surveys are completed the form will be handed back to USP for analysis."

FRIEND Governance Program looks at holistic development of participants and their communities.

It comprises of six modules, spread out over four months. Participants are required to implement activities set out in the modules before they can qualify for certificates. The practicals included the starting of an exercise regime, keeping an exercise diary, making and maintaining a compost, planting a backyard garden, planting fruit trees, developing a Disaster Management Plan and setting a personal savings goal

"We are facing a number of challenges with this survey. Some of our participants have moved away from the communities while some are now employed and are not available for interviews. Some have finished the course last year and are thus having some difficulty in recalling the learnings. But overall we are progressing well with the survey and are hopeful of wrapping up all the interviews by mid march," says Rigamoto.



Vive, Riga and Sandhya with Governance participants filling the survey forms

PRISM is one year old!

Visiting communities despite rain or shine, listening to stories of pain and sorrow and seeing so many in need in the communities is not easy however very satisfying. The efficiency with which PRISM works indicates the thought put in design and implementation of the system. One never ceases to be amazed by Dr Animesh Sinha's vision and passion to do this work in rural communities and set up such a comprehensive model. This February PRISM Health Initiative marks its first anniversary. The team manages around 400 patients a week with their two teams going out to communities 3 days a week and provides free health care and chronic medications. Looking at the success the organization is trying to access resources to expand the program throughout the Western division now.

'Joining PRISM/FRIEND has been an enjoyable and interesting journey for me. On Feb 1st I joined the team not really knowing how life will be for me in this new workplace. By the end of my first week I was already feeling drained. However I was encouraged and excited about the work carried out and the good PRISM teamwork spirit and the friendly atmosphere in the office. Working with highly skilled nursing sisters has been very reassuring from day one. I love the outreach clinics although there are challenges we face out in the community. Work has been satisfying though often tiring. I hope that we will continue to work as a team and strive to improve our service especially to the underserved.'—Dr Finau Ricketts



Dr Finau



Debate ends up with a secret ballot on the Prioritization of Issues.

The youths were excited as they got ready to put forward their viewpoints during a community debate session to prioritize the issues affecting their community.

The group had to come to a consensus on a choice between having a go at solving the water issues in their area or to attack the bad roads that was a cause for constant woe to the community.

The youths are part of the FRIEND Governance Program that are learning the ropes of becoming active members of their communities.

The Ruve Group put their heads together to speak on why the road was a more important issue for the members while the Bula Group presented a strong case on why the issue of water was of more importance. The crowd listened intently to the speakers as they spoke passionately on their assigned topics.

And then it was time to listen to the majority.

Through the process of a secret ballot, the youths cast their votes on the issue of their choice.

Of the eighteen participants the issue of water won the ballot 15 to three against the issue of fixing the roads first.

The youths are now ready to work on putting together an Action Plan to bring about the required development to solve the issue of inadequate water supply in their area.

The intermittent water supply is affecting the livelihoods of the residents which has seen a number of new households settling in the growing community.

The youths say they realize the importance of highlighting the concerns on behalf of the wider community as they realize that someone has to do it, and with their new knowledge they believe they can help in getting the issue addressed for the benefit of the whole community.

“Two Hundred bags! An opportunity for income for someone who can stitch the calico squares to our jute bags.” said Nileshni as she efficiently got down to sourcing the calico for screen-printing. Next came the identification of talents from the community who would be game enough to take on the challenge of stitching the calico to the bags in time to fill the order and this was not so difficult as FRIEND Field Officers touched base with their community participants who had listed sewing as part of skills assessment for their Income Generation Projects. Sumintra and Zareen from Ba, both took on 100 bags each and got down to completing the project within three days of receiving the material. The bags were ready for delivery in time for the weeklong meeting at FemLink. The efficiency with which the project was undertaken indicates that skills are there in the communities, they need a link with market!



Nileshni with conference bags ready for delivery

Recipe Corner



Coconut/Mint Chutney

Ingredients

2 cups freshly grated coconut
1tbsp til (Sesame Seeds)
3 fresh chillies
3 tbsp lemon/tamarind juice
2 cloves of garlic
Coriander or mint leaves to taste
Salt to taste

For Dressing (Optional)

1 tsp mustard seeds
Dry Red Chillies
1 tspn *Friend's Fiji Style®* Virgin Coconut Oil

Method:

Dry roast fresh grated coconut in til it starts to turn brown. Put this on the side and you can use the same utensil to dry roast sesame seeds til it turn golden brown. Put all the ingredients in a blender/food processor and blend the mixture for about two-three minutes. Add water if you wish for the desired consistency. Pop some mustard seeds in hot oil and mix through the mixture. Ready to serve as an

Try the chutney on your sandwich!

FRIEND provides market for North Farmers

The farmers in the North are pleased at discovering a new market for their produce.

FRIEND currently takes in regular supplies of dried peanuts, that are roasted and packed as a ready to eat snack. Two farmers, Mr Shankara Nand and Mr Shreyman Chand say selling their produce has become so much easier now as they don't have to struggle to look for customers anymore and working with FRIEND they are assured of a ready market.

Mr Nand says that the Labasa branch of FRIEND is also conveniently located where it's easy for farmers to off load their products. Currently CDP courier services are providing concessional rates for 100s of kgs of dried items from Labasa to Viti Levu.



Mr Shankara Nand and Mr Shreyman Chand with Sunita Sunder

The farmers also highlighted the fact that not all farmers will be able to bring their products to FRIEND as they have small quantities of items and their transportation cost is too high. To solve this FRIEND has been planning to set up collection centres and is looking for resources to enable these and set up transportation routes.

Meanwhile *Friend's Fiji Style®* Roast Peanuts are proving popular at the lunchtime office sales in Suva. FRIEND Sales Representative David says, on good outings he can easily sell upto 100 packets a day and the customers love the taste of the fresh wholesome local peanuts.



Seasonal Fruits in Demand

Pineapples, guavas, star apples and golden apples-more commonly known in Fiji as 'wii' have been the main products to our kitchen this month as the FRIEND food production unit worked diligently to turn these widely available local fruits into jams.

While pineapples have had steady market in the past, those who had supplies of guavas, star apples and golden apples have found themselves a new steady market at FRIEND.

Food Production Supervisor, Mohinesh Reddy says the challenge for his team is to ensure that they are able to process as much fruits as possible since these fruits are seasonal and will not be available for too long. Mohinesh says most of the suppliers are those who have a tree or two in their backyards but this month they have also taken a delivery all the way from Sigatoka, where a farmer made all his way to Tuvu with 100kg of golden apples. Since the season for Rosella is here we are looking forward to receiving large quantities of rosella as well.

Guava \$1000/ton—\$1.00 per kg
Star Apple \$1500/ton
Golden Apple/Wee \$1500/ ton
Pineapple \$1000/ton
Lime/Indian Lime \$2000/ton
Rosella \$1500/ton (fresh)
Rosella (dried) \$5000/ton

Rosella

@ \$1.50/kg



Rosella is the fruit of the 'khatta bhaji'

Please contact Mohinesh on 6663181

PO Box 4944
LAUTOKA
Fiji Islands

February 10, 2011

The Roads Engineer
Public Works Department
LAUTOKA

Dear Sir

RE : ROAD TO DRASA SECONDARY/PRIMARY SCHOOL

I am very concern about the road going to Drasa Secondary and Primary School. Every morning and afternoon I have to drop and pick my children and the road condition is so bad that you would not be able to drive your vehicle. To avoid pot hole, the drivers use the smoother side of the road and this could easily cause accidents or can hit the students walking on the road.

Hundreds of people and children use the road including the teachers and students. People from Drasa Dam also use the same road to go to work and to town. We are paying road levy every year and I think the road conditions should be of good standard.

I understand that it is rainy season but I am sure authorities concerned should please look into the matter.

I hope my concern is considered, Sir.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

V Kumar

Veena Kumar

Veena's Story

"As I drove my kids to school I once again was shocked at the condition of the road. It was maybe at it's worst since I knew. I thought, why doesn't someone do anything about it? Then a little voice inside me said, why are you waiting for others to do something? What can you do? It is when I resolved that I will write a letter to the authorities to bring their attention to the situation. Maybe they do not know about the condition of this very important road as they had not been down here themselves. Maybe someone has not brought it to their attention. I m hopeful that something will be done soon."



Your Mail

Appreciative for the continuous receipt of the newsletter. It was a great to be updated with fresh information and hopefully will be shared amongst others throughout the Pacific countries.

Thank you

John Harunari

Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock

Solomon Islands Government

I don't know if I have said this but FRIEND Newsletter is very informative. Thanks for giving us such a lovely piece.

Sneh Chaudhary

Senior Journalist

FM96/Navtarang/Radio Sargam

Thank you for another interesting and inspiring newsletter. Congratulations to FRIEND for garnering the Sofitel market. Best wishes for greater success in 2011.

Suliana Siwatibau

Suva

Thanks for the info. Keep up the good fight.....we at Coop....are also very busy on training for the Community...next week I will go down to Malake for the Basic Business Management Trg - 3 days

Cheers and May God bless you...

EVUIBURETA

TRA.OFFICER - COOP

Actually I was sending you an email today on the sampling of jams I saw at Sofitel.

I must say my wife and I also sampled the jam and were very impressed with the taste. We bought it from our shop for home use.

I wanted to know if its possible to do this sampling in my busy stores like at the airport in the mornings and my café in Sigatoka and have it available for sale.

Regards

Harish Tappoo

Executive Director

Tappoo Group of Companies,

Mentorship for Youths

Preparations for the YEN Mentorship Program 2011 are well underway and the program is expected to start on schedule in April.

Youth Volunteer Tamsin Lyons says the number of volunteer mentors who have come forward to support the program has been encouraging and reflects well on the 'giving' spirit of the community who are willing to share their experience and knowledge for the benefit of others. The Youth team is currently looking through the applications from youths and is in the process of short listing the first fifteen.

"We are planning to run four sets of the program throughout the year in West alone and would welcome interest from anyone who may be interested in being a volunteer mentor. The volunteer mentor will be charged with providing counsel and guidance to their mentee to help them realize and reach their full potential."

"Most of the youths we work with are able to identify their latent skills and dreams, and the idea behind the program is to provide them with someone they can look upto for advise and guidance to keep them motivated and assist them in reaching out to achieve their dreams.

Lyons says they are excited with the re-vamped program which is aimed at improving the efficacy of the service delivery to youths.

By Sandhya Narayan

February Birthday's



Sashi



Sis Sai



Sunita



Paula