



Takitaki

FRIEND—A Solar Village

FRIEND will soon be able to run on solar energy thanks to a capital grant from AUSAID for purchase and installation of solar grid solution for all the energy needs at the headquarters. In what has become a new 'landmark' on the Kings Road, FRIEND headquarters is located around 16 km out of Lautoka, towards Ba.

With the location of FRIEND's headquarters in a rural setting, for better access to rural communities, it is essential for the organization to be able to have the capacity to harness power. Unfortunately, due to the remote location, there are recurrent power fluctuations which can take a substantial amount of time to rectify. This causes difficulties for all of our operations, from production to administration. As the productions grow the energy needs will also increase.

The best energy option suggested by experts point towards investment in a solar powered system with capacity of producing at least 18-20 KWH/Day.

While the initial investment may be steep, the solar energy solution is expected to be economical for FRIEND in the long run. Through the use of solar panels, not only will we be reducing the amount of non-renewable natural resources being consumed but have access to green energy. With the solar grid solution FRIEND will also be able to sell access power back to Fiji Electricity Authority.

FRIEND expresses its gratitude to AUSAID for recognizing the need for green energy at FRIEND as it expends its social and economic em-



AUSAID First Secretary Development Tim Gill gets down on the ground during a visit to a FRIEND Community early this month.

powerment programs to the communities in need. AUSAID is also supporting the core costs of the organisation together with NZAID enabling efficient running of its programs .



FRIEND Board Meets

FRIEND Board met up early this month to discuss range of policy issues affecting the organization. The current board has Dr Pramila Devi (USP Academic) as the President and Mr Phillip Gock (Lautoka Businessman) as the Treasurer.

Ms Rajneesh Charan (IT Manager FSC), Mr Hemraj Mangal (Pastor), Ms Anaseini Serau (Senior Bank Officer ANZ) and Mr John Shanon (Businessman) continue as general members, while Ms Bulou Amalini (Community Worker - Ba Provincial Council) has replaced Mr Esala Nakalevu (Senior Manager Fiji Pine Trust).

FRIEND Board members serve the organization in advisory capacity as volunteers for up to two consecutive term of 5 years.

The diversity of experience of Board Members ensures efficient and innovative service delivery in dealing with issues of the communities.

Around the table Phillip Gock, Hemraj Mangal, Dr Pramila Devi, Rajneesh, Bulou Amalini, Sashi Kiran

Rosella in Season

A glance inside the FRIEND Food Production Center at Tuvu is definitely eye-catching at the moment as the ladies decked in white tackle the deep red mounds of Rosella fruit in preparation for various rosella products.

Rosella grows almost wild in rural areas and is now in the fruiting season. "We have been getting good supply, and are currently processing upto 30kg of rosella a day. This is a good time for us to stock up our supplies as we work towards launching rosella tea in the bigger market and the popularity of rosella tea grows amongst the connoisseurs," says Mohinesh Reddy, FRIEND Quality Controller.

"We have been receiving supplies from as far as Vanua Levu and Rakiraki."

FRIEND has been promoting planting of this fruit in its communities which needs very little care, if any. Reddy says the farmers are more than happy with availability of a market as this was previously wasted product. Sofitel is currently largest buyer of our Rosella tea.



Families and their Importance

The main message for the World Family Day celebrations at Naviyago came with a focus on importance of building strong families. Our chief guest for the day, Richard Donaldson, who is also the youth Coordinator for FRIEND said that ‘in order to build strong families, there is an urgent need for ‘loving together’, in other words taking time out for each other - as husbands and wives, we need to spend time together to make marriages work, as parents and children we need to spend time together to understand one another, love one another, support one another, etc.’

The celebrations saw the Naviyago Village playing host to a neighboring Fijian as well as an Indo-Fijian settlements bringing together a mix of races and cultures. Volunteers from the American Volunteer NGO HELP International also added an international flavor to the gathering.

Following the formalities of the official opening, the day was full of fun and games as teams participated in apple eating competitions, marble race, sack race, a tug-of-war and a volleyball competition.

The participants included young and old as they cheered each other to the finishing lines.

By Vive Liutaki



Composting Market Waste in Labasa

FRIEND Labasa has initiated a Composting Project at the Labasa Market in partnership with the Labasa Hospital.

FRIEND will provide training on how to look after the compost to the market vendors while the Hospital will provide for the compost bins.

The partnership comes following the successful implementation of a compost project at the Labasa Hospital assisted by FRIEND.

Labasa Programs Team Leader Mereani Lomavere says they are working to improve healthy living in the Northern division, as the numbers on Non Communicable diseases continues to rise at National level.



Ansoo plants a lime tree @ Labasa Hospital

Fruit Tree Planting Continues

FRIEND staff and volunteers planted twenty fruit trees at Labasa Hospital grounds this month. The seedlings were donated by the Ministry of Forestry Northern Division.

FRIEND Labasa Programs Team Leader, Mereani Lomavere says, “There are a few fruit trees around Labasa Hospital. But with the current planting of soursop, wee apple, mandarin, orange, guava, lime and cumquat, the idea is to supplement the availability of fresh fruits for

patients admitted at the hospital.”

Lomavere says they have utilized the empty lawns around the hospital to put the trees in.

“It will also be a legacy for those who planted those trees especially the young volunteers. A young man said that this will be something to tell our children and great grand children about.”

FRIEND encourages planting of fruit and food trees for food security and environmental sustainability.—Labasa Staff

Vani's Chicks for Income

As I got to Naviyago for a follow up visit after the Community Governance Graduation held in April, Vani sought me out and excitedly told me of her determination to get her poultry project underway. She excitedly showed me the chicken coop she had already started working on, and said that all she needed now were the chicks.

Vani had identified poultry farming as her income generation possibility during the FRIEND Social and Economic Empowerment Training. The six month training program included modules on Active Citizenship, Community Governance, Health & Hygiene, Income Generation, Disaster Management and Participatory Budgeting. In our subsequent visits we saw the work on her coop progressing step by step. In the meantime we also managed to talk to Pacific Feeds seeking their expert advice on how Vani could proceed with her project.

On the 1st of June, upon arrival at Pacific Feed, Vani, Jone (Nawaikula) and I were taken into the office and were briefed on the 2 different types of birds and their care and management.

After showing us around, the Shop Manager for Lautoka Branch, Avinesh Kumar told Vani, “I will give you 100 birds - 50 Hy-Line and 50 Meat Birds, to start with. Come around if you need more information but you will have to find your own market”.

Vani shook Avinesh's hands and hugged me with tears in her eyes.

57 year old Vani says she has never done any business and she only wished she had known FRIEND and about their trainings long time ago.

Vani admits that now the main challenge for her is to see that all of her 100 birds survive and grow, and she is confident that she can rise up to it.

A well known American academic, Carl Bard says, “*Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end.*”

By Vive Liutaki



Vani Leca



Vani's Chicks

In the hunt for new markets.

"They came, they sampled and we conquered." Well, actually no one said that but those were the thoughts that went through my mind as I was updated on the outcome of the visit.

In our ongoing efforts to secure markets for community products, not too long ago we sent out a letter inviting members of the Fiji Hotel Association to come out to Tuvu, sample our products, have a look at how it is made and meet with the people behind the various products.

Captain Cook Cruises of Nadi responded immediately asking us how soon could this be done!

The ten member team visited FRIEND mid May and a productive meeting ensued with discussions on new product ideas for the tourism company. And, should you be going on a Captain Cook Cruise and feel you want to give your taste buds the added holiday treat, don't forget to check out our range of products at the Ships Boutique Store. We look forward to building a stronger relationship with Captain Cook Cruises in our effort to alleviate poverty in Fiji.

By Sandhya Narayan



Sashi & Nilesjni show recycled paper to the guests



Time out for sampling of *Friend's Fiji Style®* gourmet products

Boosting Staff Training

Every Monday and Friday morning from 8:30am to 9am our 'Programs room' is transformed into an 'In-house Training room' and is a-buzz with learning activities. Mondays are for general training covering local, national or global issues; matters of departmental awareness; or topics that will help our organization function more effectively, while Fridays concentrate on language training increasing our proficiency in Fijian, Hindi and Sign languages to help us to be more effective in our community dealings. FRIEND also invests in staff development through other training providers. We have recently taken advantage of the Fiji National University National Training & Productivity Centre's Training of Trainers Modules I & II courses. I was sponsored for these two modules and have been able to apply what I have learnt in both the YEN Program training and in our In-house training sessions and planning. I enjoyed networking with people from other businesses, raising awareness of FRIEND's work and inquiring about possible small scale partnerships. My hope is that these links will be mutually beneficial in the future.

As an organization it is a thrill to be able to bring much needed training to communities free of charge. We are able to help men, women and youth develop themselves to be active solutions in the challenges of life instead of living with hand outs. We are still trying to improve our service delivery and more purposefully develop our staff according to our Strategic Plan. By positioning ourselves as a learning organization we hope to be on the cutting edge of service delivery to the communities we work with. We aim to be a leading example among the other agencies we work alongside. FRIEND seeks to build a strong credibility in every sphere of work being done. We also aspire to be a key partner among local businesses and other bodies as we facilitate poverty alleviation and nation building in Fiji.

By Richard Donaldson

A range of mirrors...

The first mirrors used by people were most likely pools of dark, still water, or water collected in a primitive vessel of some sort. The earliest manufactured mirrors were pieces of polished stone. Since then the mirrors have come a long way.

There are many of us who take the existence of mirrors for granted, but try going a few days without looking into one!! And you will surely realise it's importance.

One of FRIEND Income generation projects involves creating artistic and unique mirror frames as each is individually handmade to a very high standard by youths under FRIEND's

DESI program. Check out the fast moving range at Friend's Fiji Style Shop for a mirror of your own. Should you have any particular ideas for your needs, these can be put together, depending on the availability of the raw materials. Talk to us for your special orders -ph 6663181 or 3300870.



Bush ferns and shells decorate this piece

By Nilesjni Sekar

Wacipoki Recipe or Rourou Balls

Ingredients:

1 bundle rourou
1 onion for layering
2 cups flour
Oil to fry
Coconut Milk
Salt, Garlic

Basic Recipe without stuffing

Method:

Slice cleaned rourou leaves into fine strips
Mix rourou leaves with flour, water, salt and garlic in a thick paste consistency till the mixture is ready to hold shape.
Take a palmful of this mixture and make as many balls as you can.
Deep fry the balls and put it all together in one pot, laying them one top of another after frying. Layer with onion rings
Cover the balls with coconut milk and cook slowly.
Serve with salad, cassava or dalo

A traditional Lauan delicacy

Rourou leaves with optional stuffing of your choice (seafood, tuna, meat) wrapped up delicately and cooked in coconut milk



Mouthwatering Wacipoki made by VIVE LIUTAKI

Youths on the Move...

“Increased self confidence”, “good exposure”, and “new leadership skills” were the responses of our three youths who had come back from a week long forum on leadership.

The three were part of a Youth Governance Forum held in Nadave from 10th – 14th of May.

The CCF organized Forum hosted a total of 35 youths from around Fiji



Milika Heritage

for the one week event. Milika says the forum covered a number of interesting topics which included understanding different leadership styles, linking up youth projects with government plans and exploring various forms of advocacy and education.

Atama says the workshop has helped him to be more responsible in his community with the youths and work towards community development that’s needed.

He believes that with his newfound confidence, he can perform better as the Captain of his village rugby team as he realizes that this role has great challenges as he is deals with his peers.

Jonetani says apart from new learnings, the forum provided them with an opportunity to form new friendships.



Atama Dela

for the one week event.

Milika says the forum covered a number of interesting topics which included understanding different leadership styles, linking up youth projects with government plans and exploring various forms of advocacy and education.



Jonetani Ravatu

All the way from UK...

Kemi Ani-Agbaje paid her own way to FRIEND a short three months ago through 2 Way Development in London. She is the 3rd volunteer to have come through the agency in the last two years



“Queen Kemi” at her farewell do by FRIEND Staff

My experience at FRIEND has been one I will never forget. Everyone here has been so lovely and has made me feel like a part of the FRIEND family which has made me feel so comfortable.

At FRIEND I have been involved with the Youth Employment Network program which was very successful. Firstly, I was happy to see that there was a balanced mix of Fijians and Indians in the class room and the difference of age also added diversity to the program. In my previous youth

work experience I have seen that having a mixture of culture and age group helps derive knowledge, from one another. It was also interesting to see the youth problems we have in UK are very similar to the problems the youth have in Fiji. It was funny to see that the youths thought of the UK as being a land of dreams but they were shocked to hear that people in the UK have exactly the same problems that they do.

After the Youth Employment Network Program, I then moved on to coordinating a mural painting project; there has been a lot of delays however we have got most of the things planned and it would hopefully be able to go forth after my departure.

To conclude everyone in FRIEND has been very welcoming and I believe I have learnt how to live like a true Fijian just from being at work. The staff have being very helpful in showing me the Fiji hotspots and how to enjoy Fiji. I am very sad to be leaving but I am glad that I have had this great opportunity.



Full range on display



Chilled Tamarind Juice



Sandhya & Kalesi

FRIEND at FIJI Showcase 2011

A last minute check in with the organizers of FIJI Showcase got us a promise to find a space even though the stall spaces had all been sold out.

Total Events confirmed space for us almost immediately after talking to the good people at Yellow Ribbon Campaign. Yellow Ribbon were putting up their own tent outside the arena, and “of course they had space for us.”

Of the 60,000 plus crowd that flocked to the Vodafone Arena over the nine days of FIJI Showcase, unfortunately majority did not make it to our corner. Some got deterred by the sporadic rains, while some found the effort of wading through the crowds inside the arena, leaving them sapped for energy.

And then there were those who made special efforts of looking us up after the continuous efforts of communications Fiji Limited groups of radio stations highlighting the presence of FRIEND at FIJI Showcase with a variety of food and craft products for poverty alleviation in Fiji. Those who made it certainly enjoyed our new range of products, if you missed out please visit our shop at 62 Pratt Street.

A Glimpse of an Urban Garden

“We have space, so why not?”

Thus we got the ball rolling to set up a sample urban garden in the middle of the Suva City—62 Pratt Street.

The garden is still in its initial evolutionary

stages but it is a pleasure to see the seeds and seedlings spreading cheer with their greenery.

Friend’s Fiji Style® Shop Assistant Kalesi

Bale says one of the first things she does after opening the Shop is to

Lemon grass for fresh herbal tea



look at the small set up and have a “quick word” with the plants to encourage them to keep growing. Soon, one may be able to stock up on supplies of selected fresh herbs from our garden too.



Bele, Mint and Basil growing harmoniously in sacks