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Solar Power launch at Tuvu marks FRIEND's 9th Birthday

the not too distant future as a solution to energy needs of the country.

AusAID First Secretary Development Cooperation Mr Tim Gill graced the program with his presence and commended the initiative saying AusAID is proud of both, the core support for FRIEND – totaling around FJD 1 million since 2008 – and this new capital investment - a further FJD150,000 to enable FRIEND to work with communities to, strengthen, empower, stimulate new ideas, find solutions, expand incomes, save money for the future, build resources and find new markets. Mr Gill says this is exactly the kind of investment Fiji needs. He says through funding this solar project AusAID is happy it can provide even more energy to what is already a very powerful organization (FRIEND) and hopes it will help FRIEND to take its work to the next level to develop communities in Fiji.

by FRIEND even if it did not start off that way. Kiran says the Solar Project for FRIEND stemmed from the need to find a solution to intermittent power fluctuations at the FRIEND office in Tuvu, affecting its operations, communications and the Information Technology since the relocation of the Headquarters about a year ago. Ms Kiran says, while the initial investment may be steep, the solar energy solution is expected to be economical for FRIEND as well as beneficial for environment in the long run.

Since its inception nine years ago, FRIEND has been working towards poverty alleviation in the most underserved communities of Fiji. FRIEND set up its first office on 29th August 2002 at Naviti Street, Lautoka. Since then, FRIEND has grown and to expand its services has set up an office in Labasa, a shop in Suva, and has set up its head quarters at Tuvu. Each of these timely, natural transitions have developed our capacity to reach out and better serve the most in need.

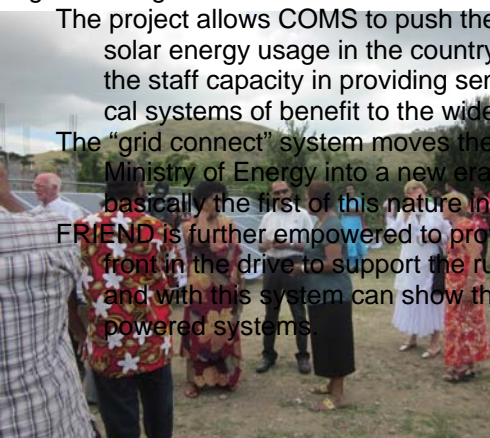


Sashi with Tim Gill of AUSAID, Richard of Coms Fiji & Prakash Chavan of FRIEND Board
The day dawned bright and clear, a perfect day for celebration after weeks of planning by Team FRIEND. More than a hundred guests joined the team to celebrate the moment on 29th August as Coms Fiji Ltd put finishing touches to FRIEND Solar Power Project with FEA grid connection—a project that we have been told is a first for Fiji.

Coms Fiji Ltd Director and Design Engineer for the project, Mr Richard Lucas congratulated FRIEND for the initiative and says he foresees many more similar projects taking shape in There are several aspects of this project that are highly rewarding and of significance.

The project allows COMS to push the boundaries of solar energy usage in the country and to develop the staff capacity in providing sensible technological systems of benefit to the wider community. The “grid connect” system moves the FEA and the Ministry of Energy into a new era as this project is basically the first of this nature in the country. FRIEND is further empowered to provide a visible front in the drive to support the rural communities and with this system can show the results of solar powered systems.

FRIEND Director/ Founder Sashi Kiran the solar project has proved to be yet another ‘pushing of the limits’



Guests mingle at the panel site

Staff in kalavata

Guests listening in



Youths for Basic Leadership

Youth Development Program at FRIEND continued in the 2nd Term school holidays as secondary school students from around Ba and Lautoka mingled with community youths from similar age group to connect with each other and understand one another better.

Due to space limitations each session could only accommodate 20 youths at a time.

FRIEND engaged with Women's Action for Change facilitators to draw the youths out through art, drama, poetry and music.

WAC Director Peni Moore says the youths brought up a number of issues and even worked creatively to put together a song that highlights their issues of concern.

Group One of the Basic Leadership Training

Skills Training

"It is not easy. You have to concentrate. It's hard work." said Marlin as she watched over her "students" struggling at weaving a Rotuman basket out of sasa sticks and rafia.

Marlin Tokasia is a 40 year old housewife. She says she had always known weaving, having learnt the art from her ancestors as a young girl. But between growing up, getting married and bringing up a family, she did not spare much thought or time to her inherent skills till she hap-

pened to attend FRIEND Governance Training in her community last year. Marlin says the Training got her motivated to explore her latent skills and she started weaving her "Rotuman Baskets".

Her baskets now fetch her upto \$150 a piece from her tourism contacts. Marlin is currently sharing her knowledge of weaving through skills building workshops in FRIEND communities hoping to motivate others to explore their own skills and talents.

Marlin with her Skills Training participants in Lautoka



New Product—Colourful Cushions



Looking for colourful cushions to brighten up your lounge, bedroom or guestroom or maybe some wedding cushions?

These carefully done cushions add colour to any occasion

Check out Friend's Fiji Style Shop @ 62 Pratt Street in Suva for the range.

Or feel free to place special orders through FRIEND on igp@friendfiji.com

This song was put together by Group 1 of the Youth Leadership Training

Youth Justice

Oh! Here we are!

We need our freedom and our voices to be heard

Youth recognition and equal treatment

This is the way, our way, our world should be

Chorus:

*Free education, No Discrimination, Justice,
Love and Freedom for All*

Supporting Youth

Being Youth Ambassadors and being listened to always

*We need a clear picture, of equal distribution
Our Right, our Roles and Responsibilities*

We need your Love

Building bridges and removing the differences

Youth Integration, Building up a National

Free of Crime and No kids doing time

*A video of the song can be found on
utube*



Day One in poetry

*As the bright sun showed up for the day
The youths gathered to pray
The prayer was not about worshipping idols
But all about leadership models*

*As all was getting to know each other
The task was getting harder and harder
Then came in the group's Mother
Who taught us about loving and accepting each other*

*Yoga was the first in the session
Followed by the statement of the Mission
Which had given everyone a broader vision
On discrimination and multiculturalism*

*Then came time for lunch
Where we all gathered in a bunch
Vegetable Palau was available for munch
With salad for crunch*

*The other session began with another activity
Involving the higher volume of responsibility
With its and bits of everyone's sensitivity
The groups came up with images of creativity*

*Then came the final session of the day
Where songs on racism and discrimination were on a play
Causing everyone to sway away
And this was the end of an exciting day.*

Recipe Corner– Moong

Ingredients:

1/2 lime sized ball *Friend's Fiji Style®* Tamarind or 1tbsp *Friend's Fiji Style®* Tamarind Paste

1 cup Moong Dal
1/2 teaspoon Turmeric Powder
2 teaspoons oil
Salt to taste
5 small dry red chilies
8 Curry Leaves
1 medium onion
1/2 teaspoon mustard seeds
1/4 tsp asafoetida
1/2 teaspoon fenugreek seeds
1 large tomato
2 tablespoons sambar powder
1/4 cup chopped coriander leaves
1 cup of a vegetable of your choice like green beans, chopped carrots

Directions:

Soak the tamarind in 1 cup water for 20 minutes. Squeeze it out, adding water little by little to prepare 1 cup of juice.

Choose a heavy cooking pot. Wash and clean the dal. Boil 2 cups of water and add the dal, turmeric powder and 1 teaspoon of oil. As the dal boils, skim off the foam and discard. Boil until the dal is soft and then mash it coarsely. If needed, add more water as it is boiling but do not let it get too watery.

Heat oil, add mustard seeds and fenugreek seeds. When it splutters, add asafoetida, tomato and tamarind juice. Add salt, curry leaves and sambar powder. Finally add cooked dal and mix well. Allow it to boil for five minutes.





Dr Animesh Sinha, the Founder and Medical Director of the PRISM Health Initiative has been awarded the 2011 UN International Volunteer Award. Dr Sinha who is a

General Practitioner from the United States has been providing his volunteer service for more than five years in India and Fiji. After observing trends in Fiji he created the PRISM program in 2009 under the registered NGO FRIEND (Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development). FRIEND has consequently been able to access resources and provide the logistical support for Dr. Sinha's dream to come to fruition and to reach out to the most in need.

Dr Sinha's primary intent was to create a gold-standard, sustainable NCD program that is easily integrated into the local community. Through his vision and tireless effort, he has secured sustainable NCD management services in 40 underserved communities and the number keeps growing everyday. With a team of hired local nurses, nutritionists, and pharmacists Dr. Sinha is currently managing 200-400 patients per week in some of the most inaccessible communities of Fiji. His community-based model for NCD management has not only set a precedent locally but has garnered international attention for its unique, holistic approach.

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are the primary killer of people in Fiji and it is estimated that roughly 82% of all deaths in Fiji are linked to NCDs. Quality of life is severely compromised for those affected families especially if the effects have resulted in amputations, strokes or other related illnesses. These

diseases can be managed well if detected early and the interventions are appropriate. Instead, however, NCDs have become a major cause of death and disability and a clear hurdle for the sustenance of livelihoods.

Thus far the initial 40 pilot communities have demonstrated highly encouraging results with significant improvements noted in weight, blood pressure and diabetic control. Essentially, without the program, a large chunk of the most inaccessible, high-risk populations of Fiji would remain unscreened and untreated for NCDs which would lead to avoidable disability or even death.

Dr Sinha strongly reiterates, "there is no shortage in this world.... just misdistribution." Thus in his quest "to restore the balance" the PRISM team only targets underserved communities including squatter and rural settlements. Most of the communities that are visited have poor housing and infrastructure. They belong to the lowest socio-economic bracket and are unable to go to clinics to seek medical attention for their chronic illnesses which require regular monitoring and care. Dr. Sinha and his team utilize portable equipment and essentially "bring the hospital" into each community for regular periodic visits. They work on front porches, at community halls or any venue that is made available to them. They take their own tables, chairs, water gallons, medical equipment and free medications into each community. Many of the communities do not have running water or electricity and the team has to function in less than ideal conditions.

Dr Sinha has dedicated the last two years in successfully developing and managing the program without any monetary compensation. The communities benefitting are thankful as is the health sector for his selfless, dedicated service in 'bringing health care to the people'.

The United Nations Volunteer Committee has recognized Dr Sinha's service with the award.

DESI Conference 2011

Cinnamon & Haldi in the North

Rural citizens in the North are taking advantage of the abundance of cinnamon and turmeric resources in the north for additional income.



Friend's Fiji Style® is providing marketing opportunities for these

entrepreneurs are collecting upto \$1.50 a kg for the dried conditions delivered to FRIEND Office in Labasa.



Rita

Kavinesh

Jyoti



A blast from the past

By Kimberly Nand

As I reached the front gate to catch the bus home, I realized that I had forgotten my lunch container in the

office. Since the bus was due any second, I decided to take off my well heeled shoes and ran back for my lunch container. Entering the reception area, I heard my name and saw Sashi looking at me (asking and volunteering me at the same time) for overtime work in the production room. All I heard was "pay you overtime" and still trying to catch my breath, I muttered an ok as I ran back down to the gate to get my shoes. Later I found out that what needed to be done was finishing up of checking of the shipment due to leave for New Zealand the next day. It reminded me of the times we used to work late into the night back in 2003, 2004, and 2005 in our struggle to keep the organization afloat when we did not have any funding support. We would often work late into nights, without any overtime pay on various fundraising activities. I enjoyed the evening as the team worked together reminiscing on memories of the past. The highlight was the pizza dinner, I think I had 5 pieces to myself, for some reason the pizza tasted better that night.