

10 Years



School Assistance

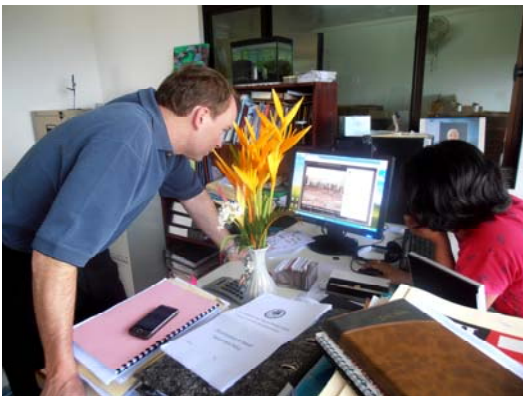
As flood waters receded, requests from many families poured in who needed special assistance in sending their children to school.

Affected families lost books, text books, stationery, uniforms, in fact anything and everything that they had put together to start the new school year.

Over the years FRIEND SAHARA Education Trust has been covering the tuition fees of around 100 students annually. We needed a boost in our scholarship fund and Air Pacific stepped forward with generous donation of \$30,000 towards the school fees of flood affected children.

SAHARA Education Trust Fund is a small scholarship scheme that has been running with the support from the volunteers at FRIEND for the past nine years. The trust was inaugurated with funding provided by International Fiji Movement based in London. The Movement has consistently been providing support to assist in the education of children from the underprivileged families throughout their primary and secondary schooling. This year IFM has donated 2000 pounds.

SAHARA Education Assistance works directly with schools on the recommendation of the head teachers to assist the children with their tuition fees.



Air Pacific MD & CEO Dave Pflieger looks through flood relief photos with Sashi.

Cultivating seeds for Crop Rehabilitation



A state of disaster was declared in several areas on Fiji's largest island of Viti Levu, after ravaging floods from January 22.

The floodwaters have now receded, leaving a trail of devastation.

Communities have no clean water or power supply, crops have been washed away, homes, shops and roads damaged.

Several people have died, thousands were evacuated or cut off.

The danger of water borne diseases remain high.

While homes are still being scrubbed, cleaned of silt and made livable, a much larger task at hand remains the restoring fields of crops that are source of livelihoods for a number of families in the affected communities.

The scenes in the fields remain shocking as many are still covered with silt and strewn with flood debris.

However it is not all doom and gloom as we met with a

few farmers who although disappointed at the loss of their crops were willing to move ahead to rebuild their livelihood.

We came across one farmer still cleaning silt from his house. He showed us rice growing next to his home.

"I had some rice seeds with me. With the waters and the mud around that could take weeks to dry up, I scattered the rice seeds. Now you can see them sprouting."

"I can also start planting some vegetables with the weather seemingly more stable, but the challenge is getting the seeds and planting material."

"I have been to the authorities to seek assistance but have had to leave empty handed."

FRIEND is in the process of cultivating seedlings to assist farmers with crop rehabilitation.

The AUSAID funded greenhouse is being used to grow 2000 seedlings for distribution in the coming weeks.

The FRIEND Seedling Centre is being developed to address the service gap of shortage of planting material as the demand is more than the available supply.

This Seedling center is geared to address the shortage at two levels.

Firstly we hope to be able to supply good quality seeds and seedlings of common plants that FRIEND advocates for planting in Backyard Gardens to address the food security for families.

And secondly, as we get ready to implement our new import substitution programme looking at large scale crops we have to ensure that we have enough seeds to get these projects under way.

The import substitution programme, is part of a new project at FRIEND, called GROW, funded by European Union. This Programme is aimed at improving livelihoods of people living in the sugar belt areas.

Flood Medical Relief

The PRISM medical team is a program at FRIEND that focuses primarily on Non-communicable diseases like hypertension and diabetes. However with the floods affecting our communities in the last month the team has been providing medical relief assistance to affected communities.

Out of the 196 children at the ages of 0-12 years old screened in our clinic, majority of them suffered from viral like symptoms like fever, cough (mostly productive), generalised body weakness, muscle pain, headache, and nausea and/or vomiting.

This finding was also true to the adult population which accounted for 58% of 256 people from 15 communities screened immediately after the flooding season.

Communities visited included Natunuku, Natalecake, Nawaqarua, Koronobu, Naseyani, Balata, Natawa, Maqere, Naviyago, Bila,

Qalitu, Matawalu, Navutu/ Nasoata, Tavarau and Drasa.

The PRISM team members applauded the community leaders and members for their precautionary effort in drinking safe and boiled water despite the water problems reported by most of these communities.

Most communities still need a lot of counseling on skin care as children were visibly seen playing in dirty and muddy water.

This was a clear indication from the increased skin infectious diseases reported in this short time when compared to all our previous NCD visits.

Almost half the population reported with skin infections in children are from the Lautoka- Ba corridor while the adult reported 58.8% between Ba- Tavua/ Ra areas.

Merelista Q



Maria, Sili & Susan take a break



Nurse Sili attends to a patient

Relief Supplies ended

FRIEND rounded up its flood relief operations in the third week of February.

More than 1000 cartons of food packs were dispatched from the FRIEND Headquarters in the weeks immediately following the floods.

As the initial items bought through FRIEND savings were utilised to reach out to the needy, contributions from public and corporate started coming in to add to the supplement the supplies.

Amongst the donors was ANZ Fiji joining forces to distribute more than \$10,000 worth of food, clothing and school stationery.

ANZ carried out a two-week long flood relief appeal among its staff at branches and offices nationwide collecting contributions.

The relief supplies were delivered to FRIEND office in Tuvu, packed into boxes and delivered to several communities between Sigatoka and Rakiraki.

ANZ Staff headed the distribution teams into the field guided by FRIEND staff.

FRIEND director Sashi Kiran says while authorities were still carrying out assessments, such acts of kindness provided immediate assistance for the adversely affected.



Repacking after ANZ drop off



Sili in field with ANZ



A YEN Achiever

YEN targets disadvantaged youths to provide a level playing field in the job market by up skilling participants and placing them into work attachments.

My name is Waliusio Waisale.

After leaving school in 2006, I enrolled for a Certificate in agriculture Course through the National Youth Training Center in Sigatoka. However I was unable to secure a job for myself. Then in 2010 I happened to get to know about FRIEND's YEN program through some friends.

I found new hope with YEN when after two weeks of training program that got us to look at our values, our dreams, where we are and where we want to go, we were guided through practices in a workplace with the basics working in an office as well as how to work with others.

Two weeks after I finished my training with YEN, I started my work attachment with FSC. I was happy. After all, FSC was a big company. After my initial two months of attachment, I found myself being offered a 2 year work contract with FSC.

This was like a dream come true for me.

Now I work as a sector clerk for the Veisaru and Varavu Sector that handles a total of 1119 growers. This is one of the largest sectors in the sugar industry.

I love my work as it has given me a chance to know and understand my fellow Indian citizens even better. Growing up I had never really had a chance to get to know the Indian community too well. Now I believe I have a better understanding of their culture, their food, their festivities and even the language.

I believe I have really achieved a lot since I joined YEN.

By Sandhya

These days majority of the people living on the hills in the western division keep a sharp eye on the clouds as they do their daily chores.

"Life is going to become even more difficult for us now," says Bijma Kumar as she crossed through the flowing creek to meet up with FRIEND Governance Team.

The small bridge providing access to her settlement in the hills of Vitogo was washed away in 2009.

Last months floods have now washed away yet another, bigger crossing to add to the woes of the community.

"I wonder who can help us remove all the big logs in our fields. We can't do anything until the logs are taken out. Hiring big machines will cost a lot of money. We don't have that much," laments 69 year old Rashidan.

Rashidan, who lives with her husband in a remote settlement in Ba, pointed towards the bare fields, where she said her crops had been.

All we could see was silt gone dry and dead and flattened plants. She recalled how she and her husband had

Lost Access

"I had to have my clinic date at the hospital deferred as I could not make it to the hospital with floods affecting our lives," said Bijma.

She says, "But then again I could not reach the hospital on the deferred date as the river again overflowed with waters after heavy rainfall the previous night."

A Vakabuli resident, Sumintra Devi informed us of how her granddaughter had to stay back from school as the same rains once again blocked off the road to the village school.

A Paipai resident, Jahara

Sheikh told us of elder students from the village having to move into the city to stay with relatives or even having to rent in their crucial years of studies because the public transportation in their area has now been stopped.

With rainclouds forming above our heads we were advised by the 'locals' to make a headway before we get caught in the rains.

On our way out we also gave ride to a schoolteacher trying to get to the highway before the rains. She admitted that with the irregularity of transport it has been a real challenge for her to get to school daily.

By Sandhya

Elderly Couple Seek Assistance

to swim across the rising river next to her home to get to safer grounds.

"We were not sure if we could make it. We wrote a note for our children to say that if they cannot find us, they can assume that we are gone from this world."

"We only managed to come back home after 12 days. During this time we stayed

with some relatives on the other side of the river."

"The small crossing to our place has been damaged cutting off transport to our home. We are trying to arrange for four sacks of cement, once we have that we will be able to fix the crossing ourselves."

"My dog Susan, has disappeared too. She was a good companion. I really miss her and have lost count of how many times I have cried for her," says Rashidan.

By Sandhya

Recipe Corner—Avocado/Mango Salad

Ingredients

- 1 chopped lettuce
- 1 cup Friend's Mango salad dressing
- 1 can whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 avocados - peeled, pitted and diced
- 8 cherry tomatoes, halved

Directions

In a large bowl, mix the lettuce, corn, avocado, and tomatoes. Drizzle with dressing Toss and serve.

Friend's Mango Salad Dressing

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp Friend's Fiji Style® Sweet Mango Chutney
- 1 clove of garlic (minced)
- 1 tbsp of milk

Mix all the ingredients and briskly whisk together.



Minesh

Susan

Doris

Shyrin

Sunita

Sashi

Upcoming events

Event:
FRIEND Poultry
Workshop

Date: 8th March

Venue: Ba

A workshop for 20
women on starting
up of poultry projects



YEN 2012
Proposed Start
Date: 19
March

Venue: USP, Lautoka

First intake of YEN 2012 to
start a six week training with
USP. YEN 2012 is funded
by EU.

South Pacific Food & Wine Festival

Venue: Denerau

Date: 14-17 March

The festival will feature a
range of Friend's Fiji Style®
products courtesy of Sheraton
Fiji and Sofitel.



UN Dates

8 March— International
Women's Day

21 March—International
Day for Elimination of racial
Discrimination

22 March—World Water
Day

10 Years

As FRIEND prepares to mark its 10th Anniversary this year work continues on releasing the criteria for its inaugural Community Commendation Awards (CCA). CCA was launched by NZ AID Development Programme Coordinator Faga Semisi last September.

CCA is an initiative to provide recognition to those who actively promote the changes that they want to see in their communities.

These range from starting up exercise clubs, promoting and setting up healthy gardens, starting up of Income Generation Projects, environmental projects and much more.

FRIEND Director Sashi Kiran says, the idea is to motivate as many people as possible to take lead roles in making their world a better place.

"While FRIEND does what it can towards our vision of a poverty free Fiji, we can only get there faster if we get our people to dream with us," says Sashi.

She says, "If we can get people to motivate others into meaningful action, we will be able to work towards poverty alleviation faster."

Announcements of the winners will coincide with the FRIEND Annual General Meeting to be held later this year.

FRIEND is Buying!!!

Mango—\$1.00 per kg

Lime—\$1.00/kg

Star Apple—50 cents/kg

Wee Apple—70 cents/kg

Chillies—\$3.00 per kg

Rosella—\$1.00 per kg

Guava—\$ 1.00 per kg

Please contact Rita on 6663181 to make delivery arrangements.



Health Corner— Eating by Colors

Fruits/ vegetables are known for is their potential to lower blood pressure and cholesterol level, reduce the risk of developing diabetes type 2, cardiovascular diseases and cancers, they also slow the age process as well as provide more energy for exercise which potential for weight control.

Green & White— Cabbages, radishes, bele, karela etc are particularly good for the circulation of system as they contain a variety of minerals.

Orange & Yellow – mandarins, pumpkin and pawpaws etc help maintain healthy mucous membranes and healthy eyes. They can also help improve immune system functions and reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease.

Blue & Purple – Baigan, kumala, purple cabbage, onion etc are powerful antioxidants that protect cells from damage. They also have been studied to have reduced the risk of cancer, stroke and heart disease.

