



New Members for the Transition

Operating as a livelihood NGO, FRIEND has been facing ongoing difficulties in complying with various legislations. The organisation was set up 12 years ago to assist people use their available resources to develop local products and market these for sustainable livelihoods for poverty alleviation. To develop products, value add, run the production center and market these FRIEND needs a business licence and fulfill all relevant requirements.

So after years of discussions at the board it was decided to set up a company by limited guarantee. The process was further delayed by extensive damage of the head quarters by TC Evan. However this year FRIEND has registered its new company. This has enabled us to comply with multitude of requirements to support community as well as organizational business development. A new board has been appointed to run the new entity. The Board members are Mr William Parkinson, Mr Nicholas Barnes and Adi Francis Ligalevu who are providing their volunteer time and guidance to take FRIEND into a new era.

WILLIAM Parkinson is a name one immediately associates with radio. He is the managing director of Communications Pacific Limited, which evolved from Fiji's first 24-hour on-air station, FM96. Apart from its two English stations, two Hindi stations and a Fijian station, the company has two radio stations in Papua New Guinea.



Mr William Parkinson of Communications Fiji limited, Adi Francis and Nick Barnes of Munro Leys

William has been very supportive of FRIEND over the years and provided much needed free advertisements for FRIEND products.

Nick Barnes is a Managing Partner of Munro Leys. Nick was admitted to the roll of Solicitors of England and Wales in 1991. He has worked in the UK, Tuvalu and Caribbean. Munro Leys has been providing free advise and support to

FRIEND over the years and Nick has been instrumental in ensuring registration and compliance.

Adi Francis Ligalevu Tavaiqia is member of the Ba Provincial Office, the chair of Viseisei Women's Co-operative Limited and is involved with community development in the province. She is a former Head of Fiji Trade Mission to Taiwan and brings with her strong market experience.

Vinaka Vakalevu to Volunteering Engineers

The Engineering team from Westin Resort - Denarau spent many volunteer hours over their weekends to help FRIEND.

The team led by Lakshman Ganessan and Muni Pillay connected the solar panels to the main building.

The solar energy being generated is fully utilised now.

The solar panels were disconnected after the main

building was badly damaged in Cyclone Evan.

The team also installed and set up induction sealer and helped in design and construction of food dryer.

While FRIEND is able to find resources and technical help for its communities its been hard to find volunteer services to help rebuild FRIEND as an organisation.





Permaculture in the North

Having completed the initial training with communities in the West , Australian Permaculture Practitioner Elizabeth Crichton headed North to share her expertise with FRIEND villages in Labasa.

“The training was held in one of the village that is currently supplying FRIEND with Lemon Grass. We are hoping that the villagers will be able to plant and supply more efficiently after the training,” says FRIEND Labasa Team Leader Makareta Tawa

“Similar to the West, 3 days were allocated for the teaching and design with a visit to each house in the village to discuss possibilities and practical aspects incorporated throughout. One such exercise showed a method of terracing using lemongrass on contour and enabling planting between the rows. We left the participants to plant it out over one weekend and then revisited the following Monday to check progress, both in their design and also the planting,” says Elizabeth Crichton.

“Permaculture is based on 3 principles. The first principle is care for

the earth because without a healthy earth, humans cannot flourish. Care for the people—provision for people to access resources necessary for their existence. And Return of surplus that is reinvesting surpluses back into the system to provide for the first two ethics. This includes returning waste back into the system to recycle into usefulness.” says Elizabeth.

Elizabeth had to cut short her trip as she had to rush back home.

“A crisis at home left me in a position where I needed to return to Australia immediately and unfortunately the planned visit and good-byes were left unsaid and I did not have the joy of seeing plans and dreams realized,” says Elizabeth.

Permaculture work continues in communities under the guidance of FRIEND Field Officers.

“We are grateful to Elizabeth for taking time out and sharing her knowledge with us,” says Makareta Tawa.



Weaving with Coconut Leaves



Dr Jone Hawea leads aerobics exercise

Holiday Classes for Students

The first Term school holidays brought around 50 students from Primary and Secondary schools to FRIEND Headquarters in Tuvu, eager for some fun learning.

Class Coordinator Mereani Lomavere said students ranging in ages from 8 years to 17 years were divided into three groups as they learnt paper craft and weaving.

The idea was to provide an opportunity for students to utilize their creative energy in a constructive way.

“Students were fascinated as they wove recycled paper baskets, another group made baskets using coconut leaves and the last group made fans ,” says Mereani.

The sessions were facilitated by trainers and artisan from FRIEND.

“They were very quick learners and at the end of the day everyone had made something they could take back home.”

The students also took on the challenge of participating in an aerobics session led by FRIEND Associate Director Dr Jone Hawea.

“The group had a tremendous amount of energy as they warmed up, got into aerobics exercises and were led through a cool down before dispersing for the day.”

“FRIEND believes in the holistic development of communities and children are part of our communities. The school holiday activities at FRIEND for students are designed to open up their minds to out of classroom learning's contributing to their overall development,” says Dr Jone.



Kajal Rashna exhibits Friend's Fiji Style® products at Vuda

FRIEND @ Vuda

The team prepared to participate in the second Farmers Market to be held at Vuda this year.

“Sales during our first outing last month was a little slower than we were anticipating but we remained hopeful of better sales this time,” said FRIEND Youth Attachee Kajal Rashna.

Kajal is part of GROW YEN 6 having completed her training in Lautoka last December.

“While still in class I was wanting to know more about FRIEND and its



work, so I applied to join FRIEND for my work placement. Since then I have worked in a number of departments at FRIEND and am learning something new everyday.”

“I like meeting new people and would want to pursue a career in customer service.” says Kajal.



Shyryn Narain awaits customers at the Trade Pasifika Booth

FRIEND @ Trade Pasifika, Suva

Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation [PIPSO] organized Trade Pasifika 2014 provided an opportunity once again to showcase Friend's Fiji style products with the best of the Pacific.

The Trade exhibition with the theme: "Exporting for Growth It's everyone's business" was held at the Vodafone Arena in Suva, Fiji from the 2nd to 4th of April.

It was designed to grow and develop trade leads, to meet and network with Pacific Island businesses in creating long lasting relationships.

“We renewed some old contacts and made valuable new contacts,” says Sandhya Narayan of FRIEND. “Our product range is growing and new markets mean more income opportunities for the communities we work with.”

Product of the Month— Desiccated Coconut



“Farmers bring the coconuts to us from far away places. Here we have a team who carefully clean the coconuts before-scraping to ensure that there are no brown husks in the product,” says Ansoo Rina of the FRIEND Labasa Food Production Team.

“The scraped coconut then is placed into dryers and checked every so often to ensure it is collected back as soon as it is ready. This is a tricky process, if the coconut is left in the dryers for too long, it starts turning yellow and does not look appealing anymore.”

How do you know it is ready? “It all boils down to experience says Ansoo.

Recipe Corner—Desiccated Coconut Chutney

Ingredients for chutney

- 1 cup Friend's Fiji Style Desiccated Coconut (coconut powder)
- 1 green chili
- 2 to 3 garlic flakes
- ½ inch piece of ginger
- Salt

Ingredients for tempering

- ¼ tsp mustard seeds
- ¼ tsp cumin seeds
- a pinch of asafoetida/hing (optional)
- 6-7 curry leaves
- 1 tbsp oil

Instructions

Roast & grind the coconut, green chili, garlic, ginger, curry leaves and salt with 1 or 2 tsp of hot water. Remove the chutney in a bowl. In a small frying pan, heat oil. Add mustard seeds. After they splutter, add the cumin seeds, curry leaves, asafoetida. Fry these ingredients for half a minute on a medium flame. Do not burn them. Just a light frying. Once done, add this entire hot mixture to the chutney. Mix well.



Easter 2014—A Time to Remember & Reflect



Dr Jone Hawea leads the team through Easter hymns



As staff geared for the Easter Break, the team was hosted to refreshments by Christian staff as they shared their message of Easter.

“To me Easter is about forgiving, accepting and acknowledging our wrongs, and restoring and making things right, especially in our families and starting afresh,” says Mereani Lomavere, FRIEND GROW Officer.

FRIEND Nurse, Lavenia Raganivatu says for her Easter means Lent and is a Festival of Celebration of

Faith.

“To me it means family time,” says Anare Lewanatabua, Programs Coordinator. “It is about being thankful for the people around us and for the gift of life. I am looking forward to spending time with my family”

The team sang soulful hymns as they recounted the story of the death of Lord Jesus and his sacrifice for the mankind.

April Visitors



International Trade Centre guests Robert Skidmore and Ian Thompson



A Team from JICA visit Tuvu



A dear friend of FRIEND, Margit sent some cash donation with a friend Eckhart



STAR Trainer Vernon Jantzi



Sufi & William Parkinson



AVI Officers visit Dr Yvonne