



Evolving Partnerships

The month of June brought consolidated partnerships. FRIEND has always been open to partnerships in order to take services to more people.

Japan based Asia Pacific Ladies Friendship Society has continued the support for FRIEND Medical Programme SMILE with a financial contribution of \$10,000.

“This is the third year in the running that Mr Mataitoga has brought the contribution to us,” says Founder/Director Sashi Kiran. “While the first contribution was spent on a community water project, the money received last year and this year will go towards our efforts of providing medication for NCD management in our communities. The health project running for the last four years has not received any grant funding however due the community need FRIEND raises funds to ensure free medical care for diabetic and hypertension patients.

Sashi expressed gratitude to Mr & Mrs Mataitoga for their continued faith in FRIEND and its health program. The SMILE program is gearing up to expand its services in the communities for diabetic foot screening to try and prevent increasing number of amputations causing disabilities.

FRIEND also signed an MOU with Save the Children Fund. FRIEND has committed to providing guidance and setting up of income generation opportunities in communities to help sustain pre-school programs.

“Save the Children Fund had approached FRIEND a few months earlier to assist in community livelihoods. FRIEND already works in same communities in Macuata and Western division so that’s not so difficult to assist.

However the SCF requested us to assist some of their pre- school programs in and around Suva and that was the hard decision as we have not been working in the division. We always felt that most of the NGOs are located in this area and its well covered with services however we have agreed to work in Central division as well” says Sashi.

“We are happy to share what we know with others. The MOU will provide grant required for each set up and we are hoping to set up 20 income generation projects under the partnership”

During the month we had other NGO visitors from the Fiji Council of Social Services and WWF to discuss ways of working together.

FRIEND also received the news on the approval of a grant for promotion of social cohesion through the Pacific Peace Community.

“As FRIEND works in communities, it is obvious that there are conflicts that divide communities due to misunderstandings, fear and mistrust. Community planning for sustainable development, health issues and disaster planning is neglected. This grant will enable us to help create platforms for communication for social cohesion for sustainable development,” says Sashi.

There has also been strengthened partnership with the market as FRIEND works towards generating economic opportunities for the communities. MH chain of supermarkets have now started storing herbs and vegetables supplied by our farmers. FRIEND has been encouraging farmers to grow traditional vegetables and is thankful to MH for now storing yams, lemon grass and other vegetables grown by our farmers. MH also now stores tavioka flour and dried fruits from our communities :)



Fiji's ambassador to Japan H E Isikeli Mataitoga hands the cheque over to Dr Jones Hawea and Sashi



Dr Jones Hawea signs partnership agreement at the Save the Children Fund Office in Suva.



Fresh Local Foods at MH

Plants & Seedlings Provide \$\$\$

An Australian Aid funded nursery set up in Dreketi in 2013 has helped the farmer grow as he develops seedlings for sale and for his farm.

Around the nursery he has grown cauliflower, broccoli, capsicum, various cabbages, egg plants, chillies. Sekaia says he supplies seedlings to 3 villages around his area as they give him orders. He says he has steady market for his capsicum and other high end vegetables as supermarkets in Labasa are able to purchase every thing he can grow. He has also developed a farm with peanuts and beans growing for nitrogen fixing.

A total of five plant nurseries were set up under the funding last year. 3 of these were the Yasawas, one in Ra and one in Dreketi.



Planting high end crops for better income



Free Range Birds provide sustain poultry incomes

Poultry Projects Continue to GROW

Around 300 poultry projects have been funded under the GROW project. 200 of these have funded by the European Union and around 100 under by the NZAID as part of its cyclone rehabilitation.

“Our emphasis remains on utilising and growing feed for the birds before embarking on any major expansion plans. Our farmers are practicing this and are expressing satisfaction with the results as they make sales and record incomes and profits,” says FRIEND Poultry Officer, Rajendra Reddy.

“Our project holders are re-discovering the benefits of the traditional form of rearing chicken as the feed cost is much cheaper as they utilize protein and carbohydrate sources from their surrounding.” A FAO report recommends mixing of fresh neem leaves in bird feed increases the egg laying.

Organic Trainings

Work has commenced with Organic Registrations of 3 villages in Sigatoka

The registration was preceded by a workshop facilitated to create awareness on organics. “Out of 42 farmers who attended the workshop, 36 farmers registered and were willing to do organic farming,” says Makareta Tawa. “The registration involves a lot of paper work.”

“Farmers need to grasp the mechanics of organics. Requirements towards certification involve on and off farm risks assessment, registering each farmer and detailing the history of each farm and only after reading all standards of organic and sanctions; a farmer can then sign the contract.”

FRIEND was able to seek assistance from Sabeto Organics Papaya Association and POETcom to encourage farmer to farmer. SOPA sharings brought local perspective to the organic farming, its challenges, successes and benefits.



Intensive paperwork with Makareta

**Product of the Month—
Friend's Fiji Style®
Sundried Fiji Bananas**



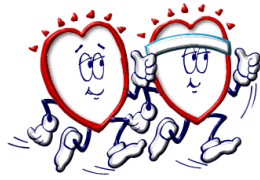
*Ansoo Raj with a plate-
ful of Sundried Bananas*

says FRIEND Publications Officer, Sandhya Narayan.

Friend's Fiji Style® Fiji Banana's have no added sweeteners or preservatives and are naturally dried to make for a perfect energy-boosting snack.

Banana's are sourced from farms around Fiji and processed in our quality controlled facilities .

Friend's Fiji Style® Fiji Banana's can be found in MHCC, Superfresh and Namaka MH as FRIEND HQ in Tuvu.



Promoting Exercise

SMILE medical team encourages regular community exercise and sports as a key part of its fight against diabetes and hypertension.

While the medical team screens for diseases and provides health care, once a week they participate in planned community sports.

“We target those who normally do not exercise, these are usually elder men and women. We also focus on people over 40, but of course we do not stop others from joining the fun,” says FRIEND Nurse Iva Tavabulabula.

“ Whatever your age, there's strong scientific evidence that being physically active can help you lead a healthier and even happier life. People who do regular activity have a lower risk of many chronic diseases, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke.”

“Most people are pretty active till their thirties, however the rate of exercise starts falling in the forties and that's when the risk of lifestyle diseases increases,” says Iva.

“SMILE is also about sustainable medicine, by this we mean not just taking medicine when you get sick but also actively working to maintain a healthy lifestyle for one and all. Medicine can help to some extent but for medicine to be effective, people need to pay attention to what they eat and also exercise. ”

The photos are from a community exercise session in a rural community in Vanua Levu



Recipe Corner—Upside Down Banana Cake

Ingredients:

5 small ripe bananas, 2/3 cups *Friend's Fiji Style*® Dried Fiji Bananas chopped, 1/3 Cup sultanas, 350g butter, 2 free range eggs, 1+3/4 cups self raising flour, 1 tsp baking powder, 1+1/4 cups light brown sugar 3 tablespoons milk

Method:

1. Pre heat the oven to 170c. Line a square cake tin (9 inches) and take 2 of the bananas and slice these to cover the bottom of the tin.
2. Put sugar and 100g butter in a pan and heat slowly until the butter has melted and the sugar dissolved. Pour this into the bot-

tom of the tin over the sliced bananas and leave to one side.

4. Cream the caster sugar and butter until pale then add the beaten eggs a little at a time. In another bowl mash the remaining bananas with a fork.

5. Fold the flour and baking powder into the mix followed by the mashed bananas, dried bananas and sultanas and milk.

6. Spoon the mix over the sliced bananas in the tin and level with a spoon. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes until risen and test with a skewer. Leave in the tin to cool initially then turn out. Beware the syrup may trickle out and can be hot. Serve in squares.



Inaugural Staff Awards

The Housing Team at FRIEND were the proud first recipients of the TEAM TROPHY for the Staff Motivation awards.

“The team members worked together efficiently to deliver the targets and were also able to actively contribute to other activities asked of them. Abdul Saiyaz as the team leader ensured that the team activities were on track along with assessments for Income Generation potential for recipient households, Setariki Colati utilized his skills in carpentry to assist those who were struggling with making their homes cyclone proof while Mereani Lomavere saw that the documentation requirements were in order to enable the team to carry out their work without

any setbacks or delays,” commended the Director as she made the announcement. “We are hoping other teams are able to work together as efficiently.

Publications Officer Sandhya Narayan received the Employee of the Month medal for multi-tasking with efficiency.

“What needs to be done, has to be done... someone has to do it. I always get stuck when asked the question of what I do at FRIEND. I have my JD as a publications officer but I also enjoy the challenge of multi tasking when other things get thrown at me and this month was exciting with many news things ,” says Sandhya Narayan.



Glimpse of Guests



Father Frank Hoare has been an occasional visitor to FRIEND since early days.

“We had lots of ideas but short on cash. Father Frank generously dug into his pockets and forked out a 2000 dollar donation to help us purchase the glass jars that we wanted for our initial products,” recounted Sashi yet again as Father Frank visited FRIEND HQ with his niece.



“I was very touched by the food you prepared for us and really thank you to have been so generous towards us. Once again a big MERCI BEAUCOUP to all of you at Friends Fiji for receiving us in such Grandeur,” wrote SOFITEL Executive Chef Jean Marc Ruzzene following his visit to FRIEND this month and being treated with typical FRIEND hospitality.



FRIEND Director Sashi Kiran and Associate Director Dr Jone Hawea managed to squeeze a catch up session with Celebrity Pacific Chef Robert Oliver in Suva this month amongst various stakeholder and community meetings.

Robert was in the country filming his new cook show. His show last year featured *Friend's Fiji Style®* Tamarind Chutney in an Indian wedding setting currently showing on all TV stations.