



Takitaki

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STAND UP AGAINST POVERTY



The community shared their thoughts about poverty on our banner at the Launch of the "Stand Up" campaign.

The "Stand Up Against Poverty" campaign of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty was launched at Natabua High School last month. Communities around the Western region attended the launch in Lautoka. The event coincided with the start of the Month of Mobilisation which concludes with International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17th. White bands were provided to the audience on this day to visibly create awareness of anti-poverty efforts and solidarity among citizens, communities and organizations all over the world participating with events throughout the month. The program in Lautoka commenced with guest speaker, Father Kevin Barr. He brings with him a vast

knowledge and work experience on issues of poverty. Father Barr spoke on poverty and inequality in Fiji. He explained that many politicians and diplomats compare Fiji to other countries such as Africa and India where poverty is absolute, denying that poverty exists here. They fail to realize that if they don't work on improving instances of poverty and inequality now, the problems will continue to get worse and they will face greater challenges in addressing issues of poverty. He concluded by calling all religious denominations to look into the concerns of the poor and make efforts toward poverty alleviation. The Launch ended with various school and community groups participating in drama, song and dance on poverty themes.

NEWS FROM OUR KITCHEN

Mango season is back and our kitchen is busy again with all of the mango products being made. Sweet Mango Chutney production started in mid-September. This project is done by a woman from a rural community outside Lautoka; she is being helped by two other ladies from the community.

This year there are a lot of mangoes fruiting, so we are trialing other new products. Khatai (dried mangoes) are being trialed in the kitchen and the first batch turned out well. With a continuous supply of mangoes from farmers, khatai will be done in large quantities to supply to the market. Another new product that is being trialed is mango jam. Two trials have been done and more samples are being made with different types of mangoes to get the right taste. One of our current products, Mango pickle, is also being re-trialed to test recipes with different preservatives. Two batches have been made and necessary testing is now being done on them.

At the beginning of September, a batch of lime pickles was done in 400g jars. After the success of the trial of 200g lime pickles, this product was done in 400g to test if it could be introduced in the market. We hope to offer you a wider range of products once the trials for all of the new products are done.



Sweet Mango Chutney production is in full swing!

REPORT: SOLOMON ISLAND FARMERS FIRST WORKSHOP



Nilesjni (white shirt) and participants in the Farmers First Network workshop

On the 19th of September I went to the Solomon Islands to attend a workshop organized by the Melanesian Farmers First Network. The workshop was on Farmer Innovators. The content of the workshop was mostly on farmers and farming, which is very different from the work I do at FRIEND supervising the production of handicrafts, but I am glad that I was given this opportunity to attend. Along with the other participants, I was able to visit an organic farm. I was amazed when I met the farmer there, Joani, and saw his dedication towards his farm. I have also learned some new things that I can use in my work. The concept of creating a network of innovators in a particular field is one that I hope to implement with the creative people I work with in the Income Generating Program at FRIEND. From this workshop I have learned the benefits of connecting people with common interest to share knowledge and learn from each other's good work.

—Nilesjni Sekar

RACE AROUND LAUTOKA

Teams and FRIEND staff at the conclusion of the Race Around Lautoka

Humour, passion and courage were displayed on Saturday, October 7th, as 40 young people hustled through Lautoka city in the Race Around Lautoka: Stand Up Against Poverty event. Amidst cracking clues to find their next destination and participating in team challenges such as sack races, the limbo and bandaging wrists, the teams visited eight checkpoints dispersed around the city. At each checkpoint the teams were presented with information about poverty in Fiji and the social services that are available to them when they are in need.

All of the participants finished at the ZFM car park exhausted and hungry, but still smiling. The atmosphere at the end was abuzz as Oni from the Lautoka Full Gospel Tabernacle Church provided beautiful musical entertainment, refreshments were enjoyed in abundance and conversation was lively. Fabulous prizes were distributed but most importantly, everyone had a great time and became more aware of the issues concerning people in Fiji.

This is the first time in Lautoka that young people from across all sectors of society have come together for such an important cause. FRIEND staff were excited to organize such a fun event and witness all of the young people coming together to Stand Up Against Poverty.

What's Happening?**October**

- 16** World Food Day
- 17** International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- 20** Diwali
- 24** United Nations Day
- 25** Eid

SAMOAN DELEGATION VISITS FRIEND

Talofa! On 25th September, a delegation from a Samoan youth project paid a visit to the FRIEND office. Their group consisted of representatives from government departments, non government organizations and small businesses. The visit was one stop on a tour of organisations in Fiji organised by UNDP. This tour was an opportunity for the delegation to learn about successful endeavours and best practices in Fiji, to exchange ideas and to share experiences and stories of what they are doing in Samoa.



FRIEND believes in sharing and exchanging ideas with the people of pacific countries so that everyone benefits from lessons learned and great things can happen. It was very interesting to hear from this group, through the perspective of the Samoan culture, on the successes and difficulties they have encountered in their work.

Fafatai lava to our new Samoan friends for their interest in the work FRIEND does and for their words of encouragement.

UPDATE FROM THE ADB PRO-POOR BUDGETING PROGRAM

As a follow up to the ADB-sponsored Community – Government Dialogue workshop held in July, we are working with communities on preparing action plans and educating them on how to write a project proposal. Firstly, the communities have to come up with the action plan to achieve their need. To do this they need to understand the linkages from their communities to the provincial, district and national level government. We also teach the communities how to write project proposals and inform them that they need to pay one third of the total cost of the project for proposals submitted to the District Officer.

Tauvegavega Lower Squatter Settlement's need is electricity. The electricity installation has been approved by the FEA. The community has been given one year's time to collect the amount and pay for the installation. In our last visit, we explained to them the budget process from the district level to national level. We also expressed that they are fortunate to have a year's time to collect the money to pay for the installation for electricity. The community then appointed a new leader to write a project proposal for submission to the District Officer. The community is using the knowledge they gained from the session on writing the project proposals and budget process to assist them in achieving their goals.