

INFORMATION: FIJI VILLAGE PROJECT

BRIEF HISTORY

The Fiji Village Project is a student-based public health initiative, established by medical students from the Australian National University, Fiji School of Medicine and University of Auckland. It incorporates the WHO Healthy Islands model, the IFMSA's Village Concept Projects model and elements of the Fiji School of Medicine's Public Health Curriculum. The project was first described in 2006, undertook a feasibility study in 2007, was piloted in 2008 and has just completed its second project cycle in February 2009. Preparations are currently being made for its fourth project cycle to commence in January 2011.

MISSION

1. To improve the health of village communities in Fiji by utilizing the WHO Healthy Islands Scheme. We carry out this mission through research, needs assessments and consultation with communities to begin the process of community development and to evaluate public health improvements.
2. To improve student networking and build community development skills in the region through primary involvement from New Zealand, Australian and Fiji School of Medicine university students. We carry out this mission by involving university students in the WHO Healthy Islands Scheme approach so that they may become effective agents of change.

AIMS

1. To conduct needs assessments and action-planning with Fijian Communities
2. To assist the Fijian Communities in carrying out their action-plans by:
 - a. Training the communities in any necessary skills required
 - b. Assisting with fundraising for projects identified as highest priority from action planning meetings
 - c. Providing required expertise advice/consult for any complex problems
 - d. Providing education on any requested health concerns
 - e. Conducting health screening and monitoring, consistent with Fijian Ministry of Health requirements
3. To bring university students from Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific Islands together in promoting and learning about public health.

FIJIAN COMMUNITIES

The Fiji Village Project is currently working with Villages in the Veivatulua Tikina (district), Namosi-Navua Province. In 2008, the Fiji Village Project worked with the village of Nabukavesi and in 2009, continued to work with Nabukavesi and commenced work with a neighboring village, the village of Qilai. In 2010 Fiji Village Project visited Veivatulua village whilst also reviewing progress in Qilai.

ACTIVITIES

- In 2008 and 2009, the Fiji Village Project engaged with the following major activities in support of Nabukavesi and Qilai villages:
 - Basic cardiovascular health screening (including distribution and completion of Ministry of Health Cards to promote greater cardiovascular health)
 - Environmentally sustainable rain-water system for the local village school – fully funded by the Fiji Village Project
 - Village water committee restructure and education
 - Women's group and children's education focusing on the importance of clean water
 - School water committee training regarding maintenance and cleaning of rainwater tanks
 - Women's education focusing of cancers specific to women
 - Village education focusing on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections
- In addition, the Fiji Village Project engaged with the following activities in support of Veivatulua village in 2010:
- Basic cardiovascular health screening (including distribution and completion of Ministry of Health Cards to promote greater cardiovascular health)
 - Increased dam capacity and environmentally sustainable rain-water system – fully funded by the Fiji Village Project
 - Village Water Committee formation and education

- Village cleanliness campaign including education (of both adults and children) as well as practical skills, including in sexual education.
- School education program that coincided with start of the Fijian primary school year; teaching students healthy hygiene, exercise and recycling practises

SUPPORT

In order to achieve the above goals, the Fiji Village Project has been in consultation with:

- The Department of Public Health, Fiji School of Medicine
- Rotary International Pacific Water for Life Foundation
- Irwin Alsop Pacific Ltd Consulting Engineers (IAP)
- World Health Organization South Pacific Office, Suva, Fiji Islands
- Nattoaika and Delaidamanu villages (Prospective 2011/12 villages) – all plans are made in consultation with villagers
- Navua Sub-Divisional Medical Team – Sub-Divisional Medical Officer (SDMO) and Zone Nurses
- Fiji Islands Ministry of Health

APPLICATIONS

Applications will be declared open by the end of September of each year. Please send your application form and accompanying CV to the appropriate National Fiji Village Project Coordinator.

Following selection through the application process, ten Australian, ten New Zealand and over 40 Fiji School of Medicine students are invited to participate in the Fiji Village Project.

Other international students may also have opportunities to participate in the Fiji Village Project – please contact your nearest National Coordinator for further details.

PARTICIPATION

The Fiji Village Project is largely a public-health based activity. Clinical skills are applied only in conducting basic health screening. Rather, skills are required and developed in problem-solving, applying public-health tools and in facilitating community health development and empowerment. We expect all participants in the project cycle to contribute towards the fund-raising efforts of the Fiji Village Project. Please contact the relevant Fiji Village Project Coordinator for any further queries or details. We also welcome the assistance of students who are not able to participate in the project cycle but who wish to assist with fund-raising efforts of the Fiji Village Project. Again, please contact us if you are interested!

By applying to the 2011 Fiji Village Project Trip, you are expected to:

1. Assist with fundraising and publicity (Note, for Australian students, as a non-ANU FVP committee member you may be required to fundraise AUD\$500-\$1000 to contribute towards the project. You will be assisted by the fundraising coordinators).
2. Attend the project in Nattoaika village from January 7 – January 24 2011.
3. Fund your own trip to Fiji, including flights, transport (to and from the airport), accommodation, food and other expenses. 100% of funds raised go directly to towards the project. Expect to spend around \$FJD1500 including flights for the 2 weeks in Fiji (Accommodation is at the FSM Pasifika campus at approximately FJD\$20/night). Travel to and from the village is covered.

Please fill out the accompanying application form to your FVP National Coordinator with your curriculum vitae by 5pm Monday 18th October 2010.

Contact Information:

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****Any further queries, please direct them to your relevant FVP Coordinator****

The Fiji Village Project was founded by Negin Sedaghat, Moniza Kumar and Alipate Vakamocea. It has since enjoyed the involvement of many other highly capable and committed university students.