

Friends4Fiji Initiative

Friends4Fiji is a grassroots partnership between medical students at Monash University and the Umanand Prasad School of Medicine in Lautoka, Fiji. Founded in 2009, our primary aims have been to enhance medical education and health outcomes in Fiji and Australia, by facilitating donation of learning and medical equipment, organizing shared learning opportunities abroad, and encouraging clinical engagement with the pressing health concerns of the Pacific region.

We fundraise approximately \$5000 per year, with the majority of this going towards our Material Aid donations and our annual Study Tour – in which we sponsor 2 Fijian students to undertake an educational/cultural placement in Melbourne. In 2015, we secured an additional \$13,500 in funding from Healthcare Education Australia Limited (HEAL). Our organizational structure consists of two partnerships: students at Monash University and the University of Fiji, and students at the University of Newcastle and Fiji National University. We all work together to improve the learning of medical students in both countries.

This overview details our current activities and future directions. For more information, please feel free to contact us at info@friends4fiji.org, on +61400 964 510, or www.friends4fiji.org.

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Friends4Fiji is a grassroots partnership between medical students in Australia and Fiji that aims to enhance medical education and health outcomes through material aid, shared experiences and clinical education.

Material Aid



Stethoscopes

In the past, Friends4Fiji has provided UPSM students with second-hand stethoscopes donated by Monash University students. However, in the spirit of “solidarity not charity”, we now partner with HEAL and Co-Op Bookshop to provide Fijian students with **equitable** access to fair prices for the high-quality Littmann Classic Stethoscopes (discounted by over 50%!).

Anatomy models and Clinical Skills Simulation Equipment

Our partnership with HEAL has allowed us to provide FJD\$3,000 of Anatomy model specimens, selected in conjunction with the UPSM Anatomy Department. We are grateful for the support of the Centre for Human Anatomy Education at Monash University, who have sourced funding to donate 3D-printed (extremely high quality) models. We have also provided FJD\$1200 of simulation equipment for clinical skills teaching.

Learning Resources

Textbooks: Friends4Fiji also runs a second-hand medical textbook donation program!

UpToDate & eTG access: Friends4Fiji have also received funding to provide UpToDate (www.uptodate.com) access to high-achieving students at UPSM. **All students will also receive access to eTG!**

Bilateral Exchanges



Study Tour (UPSM students to Australia)

Each year, Friends4Fiji provides the opportunity for 2 UPSM students to undertake a *fully sponsored* study tour to Melbourne. Friends4Fiji pays for flights, accommodation and food. UPSM students will attend clinical placement, lectures and hang out with Monash medical students.

Sai Camp

Each year the Sathya Sai Organization runs a medical camp in Fiji. In 2019, two Monash students and their UPSM colleagues will be accompanying Sai medical staff to partake in a half-day medical conference and provide four days of free medical care to the areas of Nadogo and Seaqaqa.



Anatomy Tour

At the request of UPSM staff, Dr Michelle Lazarus (Senior Lecturer at Monash University) visited UPSM in 2016 to provide an intensive lecture series for students and development workshops for staff, with two Monash students. Report @ friends4fiji.org/blog-updates

The lecture series encompassed the theme of “Development: The story of Adult Anatomy” covering embryology to adult anatomy. Soon, the Director of the Centre for Human Anatomy Education at Monash University, Prof Paul McMenemy will be visiting UPSM to provide a similar experience.

Support

Health Promotion Scholarship

HEAL and Friends4Fiji have provided scholarships worth over FJD\$3000 towards UPSM final-year health promotion student projects. Student groups were required to submit an application and project draft, to be considered by a committee of academics and Friends4Fiji members. We believe this represented an incredible opportunity for students to convert their plans into action, and bring about real change in local communities – whilst also giving students an introduction to the grant application process.

Education

Pacific Health Education Night

Friends4Fiji seeks to educate Monash medical students regarding the unique health issues facing the Pacific region, and the avenues in which they can work alongside and form partnerships with Pacific medical students/doctors. A range of expert speakers present each year, with dinner provided by local restaurant “Fiji Café & Sweets” thanks to the generous support of the Medical Indemnity Protection Society (MIPS).

LEARN: Teaching Evidence Based Clinical Practice and Research Skills

In 2015, we began providing online modules teaching Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) concepts (predominantly Critical Appraisal) to students at both UPSM and Monash, with the support of Prof Dragan Ilic (School of Public Health and Preventative Medicine, Monash University). We encourage students to work together to establish cross-cultural bonds that lead to collaborative research. These modules are entitled “LEARN: Learning Evidence-based medicine And Research in uNison” @ www.friends4fiji.org/learn.

Our modules have now been formally incorporated into the UPSM curriculum. We now hope to provide students with opportunities to put these skills into action in collaboration with their Australian peers.

Following the modules, UPSM and Monash students form groups to collaborate on research projects, under the supervision of an experienced mentor who has worked in both Fiji and Australia. In 2016, four students completed a systematic review of medication compliance in diabetic patients in the Fijian GP/Outpatient setting, under the supervision of Dr Samantha Colquhoun. Soon they will design and evaluate distribution of informative brochures alongside medication. Further projects are now underway!

Fundraising

Events

Friends4Fiji raises a large portion of its funds through our fundraising events: Bakesales, BBQs and our annual “Friday Night with Friends4Fiji” – which also involves a Raffle and Silent Auction. We are always seeking new ideas for raffle prizes, so would welcome suggestions you may have for fundraising activities!

Sponsorship

Friends4Fiji is proud to receive support from our partners Healthcare Education Australia Limited, Co-Op Bookshop, and Medical Indemnity Protection Society (MIPS). More info @ www.friends4fiji.org/partners.



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