

Reaching the islands!



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Dear friends,

It's been a while since we were able to leave Suva & go to some of Fiji's more remote areas to reach needy village schools with boxes of library books. We'd therefore really been looking forward to taking 80 boxes of books across to Vanua Levu. Although this island is Fiji's second biggest after Viti Levu, it's significantly less developed & so many of the schools are remote & difficult to reach. We deliberately made the task more challenging by asking the Ministry of Education in Suva to give us only the further away village schools.

We finally came up with a list of 13 secondary schools, 2 primary schools & one kindergarten. The next step was to contact CDP transport who had offered their help in the past. True to their word, they collected all the boxes from our house & shipped them free of charge to the education offices in Savusavu & Labasa: the 2 towns that would become our regional bases to reach the surrounding rural areas.

Next, we approached Goundar Shipping with a request for a donated cabin on the overnight ferry. We were given a verbal assurance that this 'should work out' but then at the time of boarding, we found ourselves downgraded to some very uncomfortable seats & it took a further miracle to talk to the onboard information officer & get the cabin we had prayed for!

With the transport issues now resolved we had nearly all the pieces in place but still had no idea about accommodation: where we would stay for 4 days after arriving at Savusavu.



Left: arriving at Napuka Secondary School with 6 boxes of library books to donate.



Right: we usually ask for some volunteer students to open up the boxes of books.

Amazingly, one day we were hitch hiking from our house into Suva city centre & were picked up by a 4x4 that made the effort of turning around & coming back for us.

After talking for a few minutes about our charity work & our upcoming trip to Vanua Levu, the driver, Michelle, asked us where we would be staying in Savusavu. When we told her that we didn't have anywhere yet she said that she had left over credit at Hot Springs Hotel & that she'd be happy to give this to us! What a miracle & a big 'thank you' to Michelle!

For the next 10 days, all our time was taken up with making long trips to various parts of Vanua Levu, clocking up a total of over 1000 kms, mostly on dirt roads. For half of this distance, we were able to travel in an official Education Ministry vehicle, although we still needed to pay for the petrol as government allowances for these types of trips are non-existent!

Here are some other interesting points: The roughest part of the trip: the day we did a 230 km round trip on bad roads, plus an additional bone-shaking boat trip out to Rabi island to give books to the island's main school!

The most rewarding part of the trip: giving boxes of books to Seaqaqa kindergarten that has 25 lovely children but no electricity or other facilities, and no books whatsoever! After giving the boxes of library books, the children sang some lively songs for us!

All our work is done on a voluntary basis so any financial help would be very much appreciated! Our PayPal account name is gouymarieange@yahoo.fr

Alternatively, donations can be deposited or transferred directly to our charity account: Pacific Outreach, account 9515841, ANZ bank main branch, Suva, Fiji, (international swift code ANZ BFJFX). Many thanks to all those that have helped us over the years.



Above: talking to all the students & staff at the High School on Rabi island.



Above: students at Uluivalele Secondary School hold up their new library books!



Seaqaqa kindy children sing some songs for us after receiving their library books!

For more news, please see our website www.pacificoutreach.com that normally gets updated every 2 weeks or so.

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