



A friend of FRIEND Ambassador of Netherland

Dutch Ambassador Arie van der Wiel made a whirlwind tour of FRIEND this month as part of his trip to visit European Union funded Projects in the West.

He visited the EU funded Food Production Facility in Tuvu and was given a brief on various other activities implemented by FRIEND.

The Ambassador commended FRIEND on the integrated approach for holistic development of communities in Fiji and said it is unusual to see integrated program work so well.

He said he was impressed that an organisation was able to look after the full value chain from assisting in growing to high quality product packaging and marketing.

The European Union monitoring and audit teams have expressed satisfaction with the results achieved so far as the project comes to an end this year.

The Food Production Facility was constructed after the organisation sustained major damage to its buildings in the aftermath of TC Evan in 2012.

Despite the damages and reconstruction work at FRIEND and rehabilitation efforts in the communities, FRIEND remained on target in achieving their goals.



Ambassador Arie van der Wiel taking his leave from Sashi Kiran

GROW project is aimed at creating sustainable livelihoods in the rural Western Viti Levu and Vanua Levu through Cash Crop Farming, Food Processing, Poultry, Apiary and Youth Employment Network.

Over the last two years more than 5000 families have been assisted under the program.



Europe Day Exhibition at the Fiji Museum

FRIEND joined the Europe Day celebrations held in Suva as a development partner earlier this month.

“What better way to celebrate Europe Day than with all those that help us make a difference!,” said EU Head of Delegation in the Pacific, Mr Andrew Jacobs.

Europe Day is held annually in commemoration of the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950. The declaration proposed the pooling of French and West German coal and steel industries, leading to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, the first European Community.

Head of the EU Delegation in the Pacific, Mr Andrew Jacobs addresses guest on EU Day.

FRIEND exhibition booth attracted a large number of people throughout the day as they stopped to enquire about the programs and pick up *Friend's Fiji Style®* range of food products and handcrafted cards.

“The exhibition gave us a chance to engage with other organizations working with European Union and gain a deeper understanding of the nature of their work,” says Shyrin Narain of the FRIEND Sales & Marketing Team.

“Exhibitions are always exciting for making sales, and we also love to talk to people who stop by to say they are using our products in their homes and how much the families love them.”



Housing Assistance 2014 concludes

More than a year after the wrath of Tropical Cyclone Evan, FRIEND has concluded its Housing assistance project for affected families.

Associate Director Dr Jone Hawea says while around 200 families were assisted for their immediate shelter needs in 2013 through AU-SAID grant and were able to rebuild on their own or with assistance from other agencies there were other families who required a further helping hand.

60 households not assisted by other agencies were reinforced and 10 new homes were assisted during this year with funding assistance from NZAID.

FRIEND engaged a full time carpenter to work with these families in strengthening their houses.

“Majority of these families had only elderly family members, single moms or were without a steady income source,” says Abdul Saiyaz, FRIEND Housing Officer. “They were not able to get down to fixing the damage themselves.”



FRIEND Carpenter Setareki Colati leads work on the roofing of a cyclone damaged house

Money from NZAID grant was also used to set up 40 Income Generation projects and 70 poultry projects in the affected areas.



Kasanita in her bean plot



Rajendra gets down on the ground



Mela is happy with gardens in Vitogo

Healthy Gardens

Backyard gardens continue to play a key role in FRIEND’s outreach work for health, food security and incomes.

“It is interesting as we find more and more families that had never done backyard gardening before are now planting and eating from their own gardens,” says Opeti Vateitei, FRIEND Cash Crop Officer.

“Traditionally in indigenous communities, farming was done in teiteis away from homes, this is now evolving through our awareness programs,” says Opeti.

“These families are also able to sell surplus crops and we also hear stories of how they are benefitting healthwise from changing their diets to include fresh and green vegetables.”

FRIEND & Real Pasifik

Real Pasifik, a mouth watering food show bringing out the best of the Pacific and hosted by award winning Chef Robert Oliver hit the local airwaves this month.

Robert Oliver, Internationally celebrated chef who won his second global award this year uses *Friend’s Fiji Style®* Tamarind Chutney with a ‘Pork Belly’ dish.

“It’s a recipe I have been using in a number of cookouts and it always has been a success,” says Robert.

Produced by Zoomslide—New Zealand the show has been sold in more than 100 countries.

Robert has been a friend of FRIEND since he first visited our outfit in 2007 when he was researching for his award winning cookbook—*Me a Kai*.

Robert says he loved the stories



Sashi & Robert Oliver at the “Indian Wedding Cookout” for Real Pasifik Series

behind FRIEND’s effort and has been a fan since. He says he believes that local healthy food is what makes the Pacific special, the world wants organically grown foods, which is the natural way of life for the Pacific.

“We are grateful to Zoomslide and Robert and his Team for including us in their show,” says Sashi.

‘We are trying our best to bring more authentic tastes of Fiji to the market.’



Youths in the Circle Process with FRIEND Facilitators—Tavua YEN



Smiles of Confidence—Ba YEN

Youths prepare for Employability Skills Training

EU funded GROW YEN 9 started with a preparatory workshop for 20 students at Tavua College late this month.

The students will take part in an eight weeks program on Soft skills and IT skills with USP Lautoka Campus.

GROW YEN takes the classes into central areas in sugar towns to allow youths from financially challenged households a chance to upgrade their skills to meet the challenges of job markets.

Earlier on the YEN 8 cohort wrapped up their training at Xavier College.

Armed with application letters and resume folders, 85% of the stu-

dents have started in their workplace attachments within a fortnight of finishing their classes.

“I had just finished Form Seven and was feeling a little lost in terms of my future. YEN has allowed me to refocus and gotten me to believe in myself again,” said Munisha Naidu.

“This is like a second chance,” says Adi Cevasova. “I left school a long time ago and it was difficult for me to think of starting school again. Now I have found a new confidence about myself.”

YEN Officer Sandhya Narayan says the YEN program under GROW is on target, with the last cohort to commence in Sigatoka by August.

Recipe Corner — Cream of Duruka

Ingredients:

- 1 Bundle Duruka
- 2 Cups thick coconut milk
- Salt
- Pepper
- Lemon Juice

Method

- Boil in enough water to cover duruka pices. t will take about five minutes to cook through.
- Add Coconut Cream and heat through.
- You can put it through the blender or leave the duruka pieces whole.
- Add salt, pepper and lemon juice to taste.
- Garnish with corriander

Product of the Month- Star Apple Tea

Star apple or Carombola is an exotic fruit with distinctive ridges running down its sides, in cross-section, it resembles a star, hence its name.

Carambola is rich in antioxidants, potassium, and vitamin C; and low in sugar, sodium, and acid.

Friend's Fiji Style® Star Apple Tea is made from fruits supplied by farmers and rural dwellers . Fruits are carefully sorted, cleaned, sliced and sun dried before being packaged for the market.

The tea has a refreshing fruity tang to



Melea Dralolo packing Friend's Fiji Style® Staar Apple Tea at "Sue ni Vakhatokho" in Tuvu.

wake up your senses.

The tea was developed as FRIEND looked for markets for existing commodities available in communities. There is an abundance of supply of the fruit in communities however while some are being utilized in homes in forms of pickles and chutneys, a lot was left rotting under the trees.

The product provides an opportunity for income to rural people while making available its healthy benefits to those who may not be able to get it fresh.



May Birthday @ FRIEND



Losalini Qiolevu

Cauliflowers Bloom

Organic Cauliflowers are once again in bloom at FRIEND HQ in Tuvu. Broccoli and other high end vegetables are also ready.

“Most of it is now being used in staff lunches as we trial our various gluten free flour mixes for rotis,” says Cash Crop Officer Reshma Sharma.



FRIEND Board Meets

FRIEND Board came together for its second quarterly meeting this month.

The Board plays an advisory role based on their experience and expertise.

The board was updated in the current activities as well as informed of the proposed programs and events.

Mr Hemraj Mangal, Dr Jone Hawea, Mr Deo Saran, Dr Pramila Devi, Ms Rajneesh Charan



Money Minded

Staff, friend's and families of FRIEND were invited to participate in a one day “Money minded” workshop to focus on financial security for the future.

“It is hard to save,” was reiterated by almost everyone in the room.

The ANZ Team took the group through budgeting exercises emphasizing on not just the importance of living within the means but also making all efforts to save for a rainy day.

“It is very common to see people running out of money before their next pay,” says FRIEND Associate Director Dr Jone Hawea. “We are hoping this training will help people plan their money and expenses better.”

