



Ambassadorial Tuvu Tour

FRIEND marked a moment of great honor as it hosted the official representatives of UK, France and the Head of European Delegation to the Pacific at its headquarters this month.

The Ambassadors toured the EU funded Food Production and Storage facilities at FRIEND, and met with bee keeper Lila Wati, whose story won the EU Delegation a prize for storytelling in Brussels last month.

"I am a little nervous," exclaimed Lila as she arrived to await for the arrival of the visitors "I wonder what questions they will ask and what will I say to them?"

She however spoke confidently of her journey of the last few years and her growing passion around beekeeping as she chatted easily with the guests.

FRIEND Founder Sashi Kiran says FRIEND is grateful for the support of EU as a Development Partner and having a chance to host and show their senior representatives a glimpse of how and where their money is being spent is a proud and a humbling experience.



L-R French Ambassador HE Michael Djokovic, GROW Apiary Project holder Lila Wati, EU HOD for HOD Pacific HE Andrew Jacobs, British High Commissioner Roderick Drummond, FRIEND Founder/Director Sashi Kiran

The EU funded GROW Project at FRIEND ran from January 2012 to December 2014.

The project was aimed at improving livelihoods of people from sugar cane farming families as part of the European Union Social Mitigation Program 2010.

The project recorded training and assistance to more than 500 farmers for Cash Crop Projects, around 1000 people received training in Food Processing, 200 people received assistance in free range poultry set-ups, 80 Apiary projects were initiated and 200 youths underwent a program to enhance their employability skills.

Raising the Pacific Voice in the Asia Pacific Forum

Asia South Pacific Bureau of Basic & Adult Education Executive Council meeting was held in Laos. ASPBAE forges partnerships with organizations and institutions committed to basic and adult education, learning, gender justice,

FRIEND Founder /Director Sashi Kiran has been serving on the Council as the Pacific Female Representative for the last three years.

LAOS Civil Society organizations and DVV International used the opportunity of having ASPBAE visit their country and organized a gathering for sharing of learnings. Sashi shared lessons learnt from

FRIEND's work with youth development.

Stories highlighted at the conference included a case study of a deaf youth involved in coconut crafting and card making for income and support of his mother and a youth from a sugar farming family engaged in the Youth Employment Network project undergoing training to enhance his employability skills after he could not afford to take on further studies due to financial issues.

The challenges faced around the region are very similar and sharing of stories provide hope and new insights of work being done in the regional context.





Mr Waisale Waqa

A Rakiraki family is looking forward to getting electricity supply connected to their home, after being able to collect money through selling honey from their EU Funded beekeeping project.

Excitement Around Bees

project, recording a total sale of more than \$2000 dollars from the 10 double hives so far.

“We have been able to collect some money through our small apiary farm to afford the luxury of electricity in our home.,” said Mrs Waqa.

“I keep a careful record of all the money coming in. With each passing season we have noted an increase in honey production. We also have some money set aside to expand our set up. And will be doing that sooner rather than later,” says Mrs Waqa.

Meanwhile work has started on construction of an Apiary Training Center in Tuvu. “The facility will allow us to better serve our apiary farmers who are spread from Sigatoka to Rakiraki,” says FRIEND Founder/Director Sashi Kiran.

The industry in Fiji has a lot of potential and we would like a lot more people to have access to the knowledge and material required to start up and sustain their projects.”

Training Room under construction in Tuvu



54 year old father of four, Waisale Waqa is a former sugar cane farmer who lost his home in a house fire in 2004.

Speaking on a recent support visit to our team, Waisale’s wife, Mrs Waqa said life had been an everyday struggle for the family since the day.

She said while the family managed to rebuild a basic home for themselves, they could not cope with maintaining their sugar cane farm due to high expenses and compromised health of Mr Waqa.

While the family planted some root crops and vegetables, with some money coming in from driving a carrier, the family wholeheartedly invested their time and energy into the beekeeping

Shelf gardens provide Hope

“A local fresh food company has asked for a dozen bundles of mint a day and the businessman comes and picks it right from my doorstep,” exclaimed Taina Tinai excitedly, “ I sell it to him for 80 cents a bundle and am getting \$48 dollars a week from the shelf garden.

Taina is the President of the Western Disabled Association. The association has been set up with 26 shelf gardens as part of their income generation initiative set up by FRIEND and funded by NZAID.

We are promoting the concept of shelf gardens for income amongst people with limited mobility.” says FRIEND SMILE Nurse Vatisseva Delai.

“This encourages them to move around as they work in their gardens and include fresh produce and flavours into their meals without having to fork out

money for purchasing, and sell their surplus,” says Vatisseva.

Trays made from roofing irons are placed on concrete blocks and filled with garden soil and poultry manure before herbs etc are planted.

“The key idea behind this concept is, that the raised beds help in providing a higher surface for those who may find it difficult to reach the conventional garden beds,” says Vatisseva, “It also keeps excess water out of the gardens, especially in low lying areas that tend to get water logged when it rains.”

“[We are hoping that once the idea is introduced in a community, more people will use the concept and independently set up their own gardens,” says Vatisseva. “The raised beds can be made from a variety of materials found around home. It is just a matter of thinking out of the box and being creative.”



**Product of the Month—
Friend's Fiji Style®
Sundried Grated Cassava**



Cassava is consumed widely in Fiji and is a staple food for a number of families.

Grated cassava is now available in convenient packs that forms the foundation for so many dishes like patties, pancakes, desserts and papadums.

The team in Tuvu continues to explore and discover new dishes made with *Friend's Fiji Style®* Grated Cassava and *Friend's Fiji Style®* Cassava Flour.

A versatile high quality product that tastes good and is preserved naturally without any artificial additives.

So when you use it, you know it is good for your health.

Detox with Fiji Cha @ ROC

Suva's favorite coffee house is now serving a range of Fiji Cha Herbal Infusions.

"I have just spoken to the Director of the ROC Cafe in Suva, they are willing to trial your teas and if their customers respond well to them, they are willing to have them on the list of teas they serve to customers," stated PIPSO Communications Officer Erica Lee in an exciting email communication to FRIEND Office.

Local herbal teas provide a perfect way to wind down and distress.

"I also think you have a great product and it should get the mileage it deserves," said Erica.

Fiji Cha Herbal infusions are sourced from local farms and forest directly supporting livelihoods for local rural communities.

Meanwhile the range includes Fiji Cha Lemon Grass Tea, Fiji Cha Rosella Tea, Fiji Cha Cinnamon Tea, Fiji Cha Cinnamon & Layalaya, Fiji Cha Star Apple Tea, Fiji Cha Tulsi Tea and Fiji Cha Yaqona Tea.

"Fiji Cha Lemon Grass tea is the top selling variety," says FRIEND Sales Officer Kajal Rashna, "We have good reviews for the rest of the range too, but Lemon Grass seems to be the crowd favorite."



"We are exploring new ideas on how it can be made more readily available and one of the new packaging trials include use of handmade recycled paper," says Kajal, "These look really unique and we believe it can be used by anyone who wants to serve their guests or customers with style and elegance."

Fiji Cha Lemon Grass Teabags in individually wrapped recycled



Fiji Cha boxes on top of the ROC counter in Suva



Recipe Corner — Cassava Poppadum



Ingredients

- 1 Cup *Friends Fiji Style®* Grated Cassava
- 6 Cups Water
- 1 tsp Seasalt or normal salt
- 1 tbsp roasted cumin
- 1 tbsp *Friends Fiji Style®* Chilli Flakes

Method

- 1) Put the grated Cassava through the blender to make powder.
- 2) Sieve the powder to remove any larger chunks that may remain.
- 3) Place one cup of powdered cassava with six cups of water to boil.

- 4) Keep stirring to avoid lumps forming.
- 5) Once the cassava mixture is cooked (about 10-15minutes, it will turn thick and clear.
- 6) Remove from heat and add roasted cumin, chilli flakes and sea salt.
- 7) Spread the mixture thinly over a sheet of plastic in 5 inch discs with the help of back of a spoon.
- 8) Dry thoroughly in hot sun.
- 9) Best eaten roasted over an open flame.

Words of the Wise

February Birthdays



"A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: We did it ourselves."

Lao Tzu, ancient Chinese philosopher and author of the *Tao Te Ching*



Take A Pledge

Eat Right, Exercise and Say NO to Smoking

"I find that wearing my pledge T shirt helps me stay true to my Pledge."

"When I walk in town, even though it is hot and really feel like a cold cold fizzy drink, I stop myself. After all I can't be wearing my pledge T shirt and be seen to be having junk foods."

"It's not easy, but this is a commitment I have made to myself and I want to fulfill it to the best of my ability."

"Having friends who also believe in the Pledge helps. We are able to check each other and remind us of what we have to do in our weaker moments."

"I love my Pledge T—Shirt, the blue one which says I pledge to plant my own garden, to exercise and not to smoke. Its comfortable too. I wear it atleast 2 times a week."



To Sugar or Not to Sugar

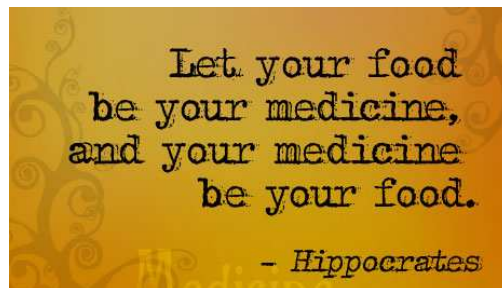
A new WHO guideline recommends reducing daily intake of free sugars to roughly 25 grams or 6 teaspoons for optimum health.

This includes sugars added to foods and drinks or those naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit juice concentrates.

"We have solid evidence that keeping intake of free sugars to less than 10% of total energy intake reduces the risk of overweight, obesity and tooth decay," says Dr Francesco Branca, Director of WHO's Department of Nutrition for Health and Development. "Making policy changes to support this will be key if countries are to live up to their commitments to reduce

the burden of non communicable diseases."

WHO guideline does not refer to the sugars in fresh fruits and vegetables, and sugars naturally present in milk, because there is no reported evidence of adverse effects of consuming these sugars.



Makareta's India Tour



Makareta embraces the chance to experience village life in India

"It was a new country with new places and new experiences, but at the same time I felt right at home as we toured the organic farm sites in India," says FRIEND GROW Team Leader Makareta Tawa.

"What struck out for me was the simplicity of techniques being used successfully by so many farmers, some in very difficult terrains to grow food without harming the environment and promoting health.

"We hope to share these with our farmers in the new year," says Makareta.