



NZ Aid Visit

NZAid Development Programme Officer Faga Semesi and Willie Morrell dropped by in Tuvu for an update of FRIEND programs and activities early this month.

NZAid has been a Development Partner for FRIEND since 2006.

One of the current NZAid Projects include the Housing Assistance for TC Evan damaged homes.”

“Some families who had received initial temporary housing material after TC Evan are being assisted further to make their homes stronger,” says Dr Jone Hawea, FRIEND Associate Director.

The grant has also assisted those affected start poultry projects, start their backyard gardens for food security and has helped initiate other income generation activities to improve their livelihoods.



EU Funded Food Production Center Begins Operations

The new production center came alive with smell of cooking and spices as the ‘production ladies’ moved in following the finishing and equipping of the facility this month.

“We were expected to have had construction completed a few month back but the little things took longer than anticipated,” says Foundation Founder/ Director Sashi Kiran.

FRIEND lost the space utilized for production purposes following the damages caused by TC Evan in December 2012.

“Peoples livelihoods depended on continuation of this project. This included the staff as well as rural farmers and suppliers that depend on FRIEND to provide market for their goods,” says Sashi.



Chanda Wati fills up lime pickles at the center

The new facility has been constructed to international food standards with funding support from the European Union while the equipment has been

purchased through the support of Canada Fund.

The facility is named “Sue Ni Vakhatokho” or the “House of Cooking.”

GROW STAR AWARDS for STAR PERFORMERS

The Grow Star Awards will be identifying around 40 farmers in the West and the North for felicitation at the end of the year.

“The three year EU Funded GROW project was initiated at FRIEND in 2012. After almost two years of work we are seeing a number of farmers who have shown significant change and progress for the better and are proving to be good role models for others around them,” says FRIEND Publications Officer, Sandhya Narayan.



The GROW projects with farmers include Cash Crops, Apiary set ups and Poultry.

“The funding from EU was a significant one and as the project period draws to a close we would like to celebrate the success stories with the people behind the success of the project.” says Sandhya.

FRIEND received a 2.7 million Euro funding from EU for working with farmers and their families as part of the Social Mitigation Programme in the sugar Belt Areas in 2011.

The project also includes Food Processing Trainings in Communities, together with YEN (Youth Employment Network) a programme dedicated to youths to enhance their employability skills.

“Despite the challenges since the initiation of the project, which included the loss of our office space following TC Evan, the project has remained on track and we are set to complete all targets before the year,” says Sandhya



“Safe Spaces for Social Cohesion”

FRIEND held a “Safe Space” workshop in Lautoka this month which saw participants from five communities taking time out to go through healing process over four days.

Workshop Coordinator Mereani Lomavere says a the last two years have been particularly difficult for people living in resettled areas around Lautoka.

“Our participants included people who have had to moves from spacious village/island communities to squatter areas because of expired leases or for job opportunities. They have also been affected by floods, cyclones, landslides etc in their new homes. They have not been able to form strong relations with others

around them as they continue to feel cheated by their circumstances,” says Mereani. “There were also those who have had no time to heal following accidents, loss of loved ones theft etc”

The workshop was aimed to provide a safe space for people from neighboring disadvantaged communities to share their issues and concerns and build a stronger community.

“FRIEND has been working in these communities over the years through various projects. There is a lot of mistrust within communities as well as between communities. We are hoping these workshops will provide foundation for better understanding of each other.” say Mereani.

Youth Development Continues

“I was beginning to lose hope in ever finding a job. I used to work before I got married. Then the kids came. Now they are old enough for me to go out and seek work, but getting back into the workforce after staying away from the job market for so long was not easy,” says Veena Chand.

Veena was part of the workshop of 20 youths from Nadi and Lautoka relooking at their dreams.

“Coming out to a session like this allows me a chance to intermingle with others and build up my self confidence once again.”

The workshop was conducted by the team from IET consultants led by Penny Moore.

Penny is an experienced peace builder having worked with people of all ages around Fiji utilising drama and theatre.



Sweet Stings

“If you go for a swim, you will get wet.. so if you work with bees, you will have to put up with stings,” - Beekeeping Trainer Thomas Korsten.

GROW Bee Officers conducted monitoring and evaluations visits battling heat and bee stings.

“Most of the project holders are doing really well. The project holders who had been set up with the boxes the previous year are already harvesting. And are reporting good yields. They are saying there is no issue with the market as most of the honey are being bought directly from them at an average rate of \$15.00 per kg,” says Field Officer Abdul Saiyaz.

“Initially a number of our project holders were afraid of bees or rather bee stings, but they are now getting more comfortable with having bees around. Some are also bold enough to open up bee boxes without putting on the protective suits that has been supplied.”

FRIEND has been receiving a number of interests from potential project holders or new farmers who wish to start bee farming.

“As the stories of success of our farmers gets shared in communities, we are seeing more and more people who think they can also do this. It has a good income potential. A ten double hive set up can cost up to FJD \$3,000. Each double hive can produce upto 40kg of honey per year. If you calculate the income at the rate of \$15.00 per kg, this will give you \$6,000 per year.” says Abdul.





Livia Raluve shows the freshly sealed Friend's Fiji Style® Curry Leaves bottle.

Moisture Seal for Spice Jars

After months of research and sourcing, the induction sealer has finally arrived.

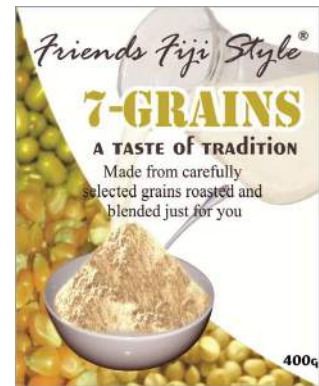
“It is not an item you will find on the shelf and has to be made to order,” said Ben Bornstein of Benefel Pty Ltd in Sydney. “We will have to place the order with our suppliers in China.”

The seal is to protect the goods in the Friend's Fiji Style® spice range against moisture.

“Our product quality is good. We source raw materials from farmers directly and then package it for the market,” says Christina Dimatai of the Food Production Team. “The challenge with packaging has also now be resolved with the arrival of the sealer to ensure the products reach the customers as fresh as the day it was packed.”

Friend's Fiji Style® range includes Chilli Flakes, Ginger Powder, Turmeric, Tomato Powder and Curry Leaves

Product of the Month—7 Grains



7-Grains or Satwa must be new for most of you but it is one of the wonder foods that I know.

Friend's Fiji Style® 7-Grains is made from

carefully selected grains roasted and blended for a top quality product.

Rural homes often had satwa as their mid day meal in olden days as they used to do hard work in scorching sun. *Sawa* is considered a strengthening, cooling, light meal that doesn't sit heavy on your system and even helps detox as it is quite rich in soluble fiber.

The best thing about *satwa* is, it is a great food for babies, adults and even old people as it is light to the digestive system and yet very nutritive. High on protein, Iron, Magnesium and Manganese, low on Sodium, low on Glycemic index makes *satwa* a favorable food for diabetics and for weight watchers as well. It is absolutely gluten free too.

3-4 tbsp *satwa* can make a filling quick fix meal. You can mix it with chopped onions, chillies, a little salt and coriander in a porridge like consistency for instant upma. It does not require any further cooking.

If you have a sweet tooth you can add sugar and ghee to the 7-Grains powder and bind it into round laddoos for a healthy snack.

Isn't it a great ingredient to have in your pantry?

The versatile 7-grains can also be made into a nutritious chutney. Mix equal amounts of 7- Grains and Friend's Fiji Style® Dessicated coconut, add yogurt and whip to make a thick chutney, season with salt and temper with hing, mustard seeds, red chilly and curry patta and a nice spicy chutney is ready for your idlis or dosa or even a sandwich filling.

The Seven Grains of 7-Grains



Recipe Corner - 7 Grains Sweet Drink

Ingredients

7 Grains Powder : 3 tsp
Sugar : 1 tsp (or Honey)
Chilled Water - Glass

Method

Add all ingredients and a thick, batter like, liquid.
Use small pieces of fruits like banana, apple, mango etc. for garnish.

Breakfast,
Lunch or Dinner!
Its a
meal
in a glass.



By Sandhya Narayan

February Birthdays @ FRIEND

Food Production Team celebrates a Special Birthday



Sashi

Minesh

Abdul



"I really didn't expect this," said Sashi as she walked into one of the production areas on its first day of operation after ongoing delays! Unexpectedly her birthday coincided with the first day of production at new facility so sweets had to be made!

"This is also a heartfelt thank you from the team for giving us our new working space," said Chanda Wati as she pinned a corsage on the birthday girl.

Sashi's surprise caught on camera

Off to India

FRIEND Senior Accounts Manager Aneet Kumar was elated with the confirmation of the opportunity to travel to India to attend a six weeks course on Business Counseling and Consultation for Growth and Expansion of SME's in Development Countries

He left at the end of the month to participate in a six weeks program at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDI) in Ahmadabad,.

33 participants from 16 different countries have been selected to participate in the study program sponsored by the Government of India.

The program will include lectures as well as field visits to allow for interaction with entrepreneurs and observe their strategies. I wish to share my knowledge and skills with FRIEND and as well as with any individuals who needs assistance towards SME development in future.



New look paper quill flowers

New Quill Technique for Card Makers

"We were given a sample of the new technique recently and when I showed it to the team they immediately figured out how to make these and started utilising it to add to craft work, says FRIEND Cards Supervisor Mere Adibuli.

The new technique has given *Friend's Fiji Style®* Handmade Cards a new look.

"We are constantly on a lookout for new techniques to maintain freshness of the product," says Mere.