



Canada Fund Lends a Hand



FRIEND has received around \$80,000 from Canada Fund to equip the new Food Production Facility in Tuvu.

The facility has been constructed with assistance from the European Union after the organisation sustained major damages to its headquarters in Tropical Cyclone Evan in December 2012.

“While we are very grateful for the quick response by the EU to allow us to build the facility, we still needed money to equip the place. Our request to Canada Fund was approved almost instantly. Canada fund has been a long term development partner of FRIEND and continues to remain so,” says Founder/Director Sashi Kiran.

The 450sq meter facility named “Sue Ni Vakhatokho” or “The House of Cooking” was officially opened on 29th August 2013 to mark the 11th Anniversary of FRIEND.

It will become fully operational after the purchase of equipment and installation by next month.

The new facility built in accordance with the international guidelines for food production will allow us to maintain the quality and standards developed from home scale production to the anticipated increase in production in the coming years.

It is expected to provide full time employment to 50 women processing herbal teas, spices, jam and chutneys with raw materials purchased from around 200 farmers thus directly assisting atleast 250 families.



Director Sashi Kiran in Philippines with board members and staff of ASPBAE

ASPBAE—Regional Leaders in Basic & Adult Education

ASPBAE turned 50 years on 30 January 2014.

50 years on, ASPBAE celebrated this important day in Manila at the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) Theatre.

The event was attended by approximately 60 educators and education policy advocates from South East Asia, South Asia, Pacific, Europe, Latin America. The event was planned in collaboration with PETA Theatre to make the event both celebratory and reflective.

FRIEND Founder/Director Sashi Kiran says ASPBAE has travelled on a long journey and has contributed a lot to the changing landscape of adult learning policy and practice as she congratulated all the stalwarts for keeping the candle burning.

FRIEND is a member of ASPBAE and has a seat in the Executive Council of the regional body.

Later in the year FRIEND is planning a festival of learning to commemorate ASPBAE’s 50th anniversary.

Journeying Together

“Its all about dealing with the past and moving on,” says Anare Lewanavanua, FRIEND Programs Coordinator.

“As we engage with communities we realise that people are sometimes hindered by unhealed wounds from the past, this affects them emotionally, physically, and mentally.”

FRIEND commenced its series of workshops in communities this month to allow people to explore their issues.

Trainers from Informal Education & Theatre Consultants lead the workshop

“We are hoping that this will allow our people to understand one another better for sustainable development in communities,” says Anare.



From Lush to Barren—The Sad tale of the Soil



Maize seedlings struggle to grow in acidic soils

grow anything here,” says 53 year old Gaya Prasad, as he points at his fields overgrown with a thick covering of Koronivia grass.

“I remember those days not long ago when the farm was producing good yields, however in the last few years the scene has changed.”

You can see its struggle to

“I was born here. The farm served us well. But no more,” as he agreed to have soil testing done on his fields before the commencement of soil amelioration trials.

The readings from his farm was pH of 3.7. Australian Soil Scientist Gerard Faber says this reading is significantly below the recommended pH of 6.5 for cultivation of majority of crops.

According to the farmer, the problem started roughly eight years ago when crop yields started decreasing and his fertilizer input started increasing at the alarming rate. Soon after that the farmer also remembers the Koronivia grass started establishing in the area.

“Most of the farm is just grass now,” says the farmer.

Gerard Faber says its about healing the soil to get productivity back which can be a slow and expensive process. The team has commenced soil ameliorations trials using local available resources under his guidance and are hopeful of positive results for the farmers.

Freerange Poultry for Sustainable Income

“My project has given me fresh hope as my options for income opportunities outside the farm are limited,” says Ravin Lal.

Lal had to abandon his studies in high school and has since undergone three eye operations to avoid completely losing his sight.

He started his FRIEND GROW Poultry project funded by the European Union in 2012 with around a dozen chickens.

With his continued perseverance and working alongside the GROW Poultry officers, Lal has

now increased his stocks to more than 100 birds.

According to Lal, he is currently able to earn more than \$400 a month by selling the eggs, chickens and ducks.

“Before being involved with the project, I was heavily relying on feed from supermarket. This was expensive.”

“I believe that using home grown feed for the birds is helping me save money to increase my stocks,” says Lal.



The lock up facility for birds to keep the predators away

Australia Support Moves for Health

FRIEND has received support from Australian Aid towards a programme aimed at introducing physical activity into the lives of those who are more prone to lack of physical activity.

Promotion of community sports and exercises in over 40’s will culminate in a one day festival of “Mela Na Waqe” or “Festival of Sports” later this year.

Mela Na Waqe is being sponsored through the Australian Sport Outreach program to be held towards the end of the year.

“Exercise is a key part of the fight against lifestyle diseases,” says FRIEND Associate Director, Dr Jone Hawea.

A number of communities have begun preparations for the Festival of sports.



Rural women participating in an exercise session in their village

Expanding the Range of Products

Friend's Fiji Style® products continue to grow as the organisation reaches out to more and more communities in its efforts to create sustainable livelihoods through social and economic empowerment.

The first products were launched almost 12 years ago. *Friend's Fiji Style*® Tamarind Chutney captured the authentic taste of the popular dish served at local Indian weddings and remains the best seller on the market to date. Chillie chutney, ambrella khuchla, mango chutney and pickles and a range of jams have now joined the range on the shelves around country.

“A number of top star resorts proudly serve their guests from the range putting faith in its quality. This is a big change from not so long ago when these establishments were reluctant to go local as they lacked faith in quality and consistency of supply. We have been there for 12 years now and have been able to maintain credibility and consistency,” says Founder/Director Sashi Kiran.

Our products include your favorite pickles, chutneys and jams, local herbal infusions, gluten free cassava flour and Handcrafted cards to suit every occasion. Card range is also now available on handmade kava kosa paper! Every product is made from 100% local ingredients.

Friend's Fiji Style® products are also available from:

Suva: MHCC, MH Superfresh, MH Flagstaff, Tappoo City, Prouds, Jacks, Cost U Less, New World Damodar City, New World Walu Bay

Nadi: Prouds, Tappoos, Jacks, Nads Handicrafts, MH Nadi, MH Namaka, New World Votualevu, RB Jetpoint, Nadi Airport Duty Free Shops.

Lautoka: MH Lautoka, Jacks, FRIEND Office, Tuvu Lautoka.

Do we export our products? We don't directly export but a number of exporters have been taking the products and servicing markets in Australia, New Zealand and Vanuatu.



Recipe Corner — Cassava Cake

Ingredients

2 cups *Friend's Fiji Style*® Cassava
1 can condensed milk
1 cup coconut milk
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon oil, for greasing the baking pan

Method

- ◆ Preheat the oven to 180°C .
- ◆ In a large bowl, mix all the ingredients together.
- ◆ Pour the mixture into an oven pan.
- ◆ Give it a shake to even the top out.
- ◆ Put it back into the oven and bake it for about 40 minutes. Insert a toothpick in the center of a cake to test .

Product of the Month—Cinnamon Tea



You can enjoy the many benefits of cinnamon tea whether you love a pure cinnamon tea or prefer it blended or added to other teas.

Sweet, soothing, spicy, and a little bit exotic... Cinnamon is versatile and much-loved, a favorite not only in sweet and savory dishes, but in tea, as well!

The well-known spice is famous for its weight reduction properties when taken with hot water in the morning as well as treated as great detoxifying agent.

Cinnamon tea is chock full of good things - for your body, your mind, and even for romance!

January Birthdays @ FRIEND



Dr Jone Vuli

Shavnil Chand

Jone Vulava

Mereani Lomavere

Dealing with the Data

Australian Business Volunteer, Dr Yvonne Pittelkow arrived at FRIEND this month to render her assistance towards setting up of a computerized data system.

“There is a lot of data collected over the years here, and as a statistician, every piece of data is important,” says Pittelkow.

Over the coming weeks I hope to be able to organize these into a format that could be helpful to the organisation.”

Dr Yvonne Pittelkow arrived in the country in response to our request for assistance in data management at FRIEND.

She will be training staff in preparation of survey questionnaires and data management.

Creating Sustainable Livelihoods Economic Opportunities in Rural Areas

Friend's Fiji Style® products were born out of an initiative to improve income opportunities for people living in the rural areas more than a decade ago.

The product range has grown over the years with more and more suppliers benefitting from the poverty alleviation initiative. Food processing is seasonal in nature. The selection of raw materials is a vital consideration to the quality of processed products. Suppliers are expected to follow prescribed guidelines to minimize spoilage between harvest and processing. If you have following products and want to sell contact us:)

	Fresh	Dried
Fruits		
Tamarind	✗	✓
Mangoes	✓	✓
Guavas	✓	✓
Tarawau	✓	✓
Rosella	✓	✓
Star Apple	✓	✓
Wii Apple	✓	✗
Pineapple	✓	✓
Pawpaw	✓	✓
Banana/ vudi	✗	✓
Citrus		
Lemon	✓	✗
Lime	✓	✗
Tangerine	✓	✗
Herbs & Vegetables		
Lemon Grass	✓	✓
Basil	✓	✓
Ginger	✓	✓
Layalaya	✓	✓
Bittergourd (Karela)	✗	✓
Mint/Tulsi/Corriander	✗	✓
Turmeric	✗	✓
Cinnamon	✗	✓
Root Crops		
Yams	✗	✓
Kumala	✓	✓
Cassava Grated/Flour	✗	✓
Nuts		
Coconut Slice	✗	✓
Vutu	✗	✓
Tavola	✗	✓