

FRIEND projects impress Dutch diplomat

Repeka Nasiko

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DUTCH Ambassador Arie Van Der Wiel has commended the work of the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprise and Development (FRIEND) of Lautoka.

While touring European Union-funded projects in the Western Division yesterday, Mr Van Der Wiel made a stop at the Food Production Facility in Tuvu and was given a summary of activities implemented by FRIEND.

He said it was unusual to see integrated programs worked so well, and added he was impressed that an organisation was able to look after the full value chain from assisting in growing to product packaging and marketing.

FRIEND director Sashi Kiran said the facility was built after their building sustained major damage from Tropical Cyclone Evan in 2012.

"This devastation came as we were preparing to expand our EU-funded GROW project after the piloting stages in the first year of the project," she said.

"We are very grateful to the EU for supporting us to get back on our feet by allowing us to build a facility where we could continue and expand production of various food products that support livelihoods of our farmers and rural communities."