



## ***Inauguration of Grain Storage Facility marks World Food Day***

Deputy Director General EUROPE AID Marcus Cornarus lit the fire under the first stove to inaugurate the EU funded Sue Ni Vakhatoko ( the cooking house) as he also officially opened the Grain Storage Facility on the Mezzanine Floor on October 16th.

“The EU funded production centre will be a key resource to our work on food security. This facility provides the space for value addition and storage of foods being grown by around 500 farmers under the GROW program.” says Sashi Kiran. There will also be a seed storage facility within this building which should be able to provide farmers access to seeds.

Work on equipping the Sue Ni Vakhatoko continues following its opening ceremonies in August.

While EU allowed utilization of contingency funds for construction of the food production facility after the destruction caused by TC Evan, a budget re-request was granted to put in an additional floor to the structure to allow for safe storage space of grains and products resulting from various initiatives



*DDG EUROPE AID Mr Marcus Comarus with EU Head of Delegation in the Pacific Mr Andrew Jacobs.*

undertaken under the EU funded GROW program.

The occasion was witnessed by a team of EU Delegates, Media, FRIEND Board, Management & Staff.



## ***Additional Vehicles to boost work in Communities***

FRIEND received a major boost with three additional vehicles to supplement the existing fleet.

“Our work involves teams travelling out into rural areas on a regular basis, and more vehicles means teams are better equipped for more efficient services,” says Director, Sashi Kiran.

“The three new Ford Rangers means safer transportation as teams continue to provide sup-

port to communities through regular visits to the projects site, often in difficult terrain with poor road conditions, says Founder/Director Sashi Kiran.

“Again we are thankful to the European Union who have recognised the challenges faced in service delivery and have supported us in the purchase of these.”

***Sashi receives the keys for two new vehicles in Tuvalu***



## Diabetes Awareness Wear Blue Campaign



FRIEND launched a month long Diabetes Awareness Campaign 2013 in a build up to mark the World Diabetes Day on 14 November, 2013.

Diabetes and its complications contribute significantly to increase in Poverty in Fiji

FRIEND is concerned that around 700 families are at risk of falling into poverty each year burdened with disability due to diabetic amputations.

According to health authorities in the country, "1 Diabetic Lower Limb amputation is conducted every 12 hours", This translates into around 700 lower limb amputations every year.

This figure does not take into account diabetes related renal complications, heart diseases, blood vessel diseases and strokes that have pushed Fiji into NCD crisis. Diabetes related eye diseases also pose major threat of disability through blindness.

FRIEND Associate Director Dr Jone Hawea says this is a grave situa-

tion that can be turned around with increased awareness and holistic approach to health in addition to eating and exercising well.

The launch was initiated with the pinning of the ribbon on Deputy Director General EuropeAid Marcus Cornaro who visited FRIEND on the occasion of World Food Day on 16th October. Dr Hawea believes the solution lies in empowering communities through consultations to develop their own solutions. The Health Team organized healthy meal competitions and sporting events in communities to bring the message home.

"Food and food habits are closely linked with diabetes and the "Wear Blue" campaign will focus on this these. We are asking our friends and supporters to wear a blue ribbon to spread the message about this silent killer, says Dr Hawea.

"Diabetes is a serious disease that is crippling our nation and can deepen the chasm of poverty if not checked."

The team has started conducting village awareness campaigns through workshops in Labasa, the Yasawas and the Western Division.

Blue Campaign calls on everyone to get themselves tested atleast once every year.

## Strengthening Technical Skills of Farmers

To plant or not to plant?, became the key question for farmers as they battled the onset of dry weather.

"We want to plant, however we do not want the seeds and money spent for land preparation get wasted if it fails to rain." said farmer after farmer as fields of crops ripened and yellowed.

In our efforts to provide solutions enabling farmers to plant all year round, an Australian Agronomist and Advisor on Resource Planning & Management Mr Gerard Faber has been visiting project farms.

Mr Faber says there is a lot that can be

done to ensure higher and consistent productivity as the land in Fiji is very fertile compared to numerous other places who have developed agriculture as their main economic activity.

Mr Faber says while the changes may not happen overnight, it is important that farmer start applying the Good Agricultural Practices now.

Mr Faber is expected to be back in the country at the end of November to continue his work initiated with FRIEND farmers this month. He has been advising farmers on set up of supplementary irrigation, use of herbicides and local fertilizer to minimize costs and increase yields.



## All About Bees

Mr Thomas Korsten, 50, has been working with the bees since an early age of 14.

“I am just a farmboy,” says Mr Korsten. “My father had some hives on his farm and of the 3 boys in the family, I evolved as the one that took on the responsibility of looking after the bees when my father moved away from the farm due to his work commitments.”

“Later I worked off farm for a few years before I went back to my bees and now have more than 256 colonies that I have worked on expanding year by year.”

Mr Korsten says while much resources may not be necessary to start off bee farming, it takes special skill and effort to sustain the projects.

He arrived from Germany this month to work with FRIEND Apiary Project Holders to improve their

skills and knowledge about beekeeping.

Mr Korsten has already visited a number of projects and identified measures that he believes can reduce the cost of inputs as well as contribute to strengthening of hives.

“We were challenged with the unavailability of local Apiary Expertise which prompted us to invite Thomas to Fiji,” says FRIEND Founder/ Director Sashi Kiran.

“Thomas is no stranger to beekeeping in Fiji and the region having worked here before and his name came highly recommended.”

Thomas will be training and working with farmers in the field before he leaves back for Germany at the end of November.



## Youths take advantage of Skills Upgrade Program through YEN

Twenty more youths from around Lautoka have had a chance to upskill themselves through the EU Funded GROW Yen project.

The project works with groups of twenty students at a time looking at developing their soft skills and basic knowledge of Information Technology in partnership with USP, Lautoka Campus.

“With the completion of another round of training in Lautoka this month, we have worked with 120 students in Lautoka, Nadi, Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki belt so far. The current EU funding will allow us to work with 80 more students before the end of next year. These sessions will be held in Nadi, Ba, Rakiraki/Tavua and Sigatoka,” says Sandhya Narayan

## Recipe Corner— Breadfruit Balls



### Ingredients

1 small breadfruit, approximately 1 kg	1 egg
1 tablespoon grated onion	breadcrumbs, for coating
1/2 tsp crushed chillies	Oil, for frying
1/4 cup chopped coriander leaves	
1/4 cup parsley, chopped	
salt and pepper,	
1 pinch nutmeg	
1/4 cup milk	

### Method

1. Cook breadfruit in boiling water until fork tender. Once it is fork tender, peel and remove the skin and core the breadfruit.
2. Mash it. It is important to do this when the breadfruit is still hot. Combine breadfruit with seasonings.
3. Whisk egg and milk. Add to breadfruit mix and stir to combine. Form tablespoon size portions into balls and roll in breadcrumbs.
4. In a large skillet, heat oil, about an inch deep. Once the oil is hot, fry the balls, until golden brown on all sides.
5. Serve hot with a squeeze of lemon.

## XMAS Hampers ready for Gifting

With Xmas season drawing near, thoughts inadvertently turn towards gifts.

Everyone wants to give and receive those special tokens that convey the message that “Yes, you are special to me.”

*Friend's Fiji Style®* Xmas Hampers come in affordable authentic handcrafted Fijian Voivoi baskets to add special meaning to your gifts.

You can order your gift baskets

directly from FRIEND on 6663181 or hop into a Prouds store near you .

We can also do special order baskets with an assorted range of *Friend's Fiji Style®* products.

Please contact Sandhya Narayan on 6663181 or [publications@friendfiji.com](mailto:publications@friendfiji.com) for your orders.

Thank you for your efforts in our poverty alleviation initiative.



Single Jar Pack



2 Jars & a box of Teabags

## FRIEND Board Meets

FRIEND Board members are representatives from a wide sector of communities we work with.

The board meets quarterly for updates and to provide guidance on various initiatives undertaken by the organisation.

*L-R Mr Hemraj Mangal, Mr Deo Saran (Treasurer), Ms Rajneesh Charan, Dr Pramila Devi (President), Sashi Kiran (Founder/ Director), Adi Balavu, Anaseini Serau & Dr Jone Hawea (Associate Director)*



## Edible Blooms @ FRIEND

“Fiji is buying so much high end vegetables, can we not grow them in Fiji?,” has been the questions raised by the Director.

Thus gardens were dug and in went cauliflowers, broccoli and red cabbages seeds. Seedlings were transplanted in August and within 8 weeks, very high quality broccoli, cauliflower and red cabbages were ready... and it is the off season e are told!

While these vegetables remain out of reach for many with their high price tags, our experimentation has indicated that one can easily plant them for home use in their flower gardens or cultivate it on a larger scale for supplementing their household incomes.

Mature heads of cauliflower, broccoli and red cabbage each weigh around 500 grams.

“We have not used any chemicals for the plants, just poultry manure and daily watering,” says Mohammed Tazil of the Grounds Team.

The harvest is now ready for sale and is priced at \$10.00 per kg.



Aneet



Tazil



Rohin