



### Tourism Business Working With Remote Islands For Food Security

Through a new Food Bank project, remote island communities in Fiji's Yasawa Islands in the Western Division will be better prepared to have food supplies in times of disaster, even if their crops are destroyed.

This initiative is the result of a Private Sector Engagement partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Ba Provincial Office, Commissioner Western's Office and Vinaka Fiji, which is a volunteer programme sponsored by tourism company Awesome Adventures Fiji. It is being enabled by the Pacific Risk Resilience Programme (PRRP) in partnership with Live & Learn Environmental Education (LLEE).

The Department of Agriculture plans to use existing farmer networks to create Food Banks, and to also establish complementary agricultural Knowledge Hubs for farmers to share risk-sensitive farming information such as mixed cropping and climate resilient crops. Knowledge Hubs will assist local farmers while facilitating the growth of Food Banks and other agricultural initiatives.

To complement the initiative, the Department of Agriculture will provide the communities with

agriculture training on resilient crops and food storage including traditional knowledge approaches, with PRRP's support.

#### **Food Banks: preparing for disasters**

The Food Banks will assist communities to better prepare and have food supplies in times of disaster, even if their crops are destroyed. The Food Bank project includes crop planting and storage so there is food during a disaster period, plus raising funds for post-disaster recovery.

The Food Banks will introduce risk-resilient crops and farming techniques to help the communities become more resilient to climate change and disasters.

The Food Banks will also help the communities generate extra income, by selling surplus crops. For example, if there have been no disasters by the end of the year, and the planting and harvest is successful, money from crop sales can be banked to create an emergency fund for any future disasters.

Planning ahead for such potential climate change and disaster related-risks is central to PRRP's work, which focuses on how communities, governments, and the private sector can all work together to help build resilience, by embedding risk into planning processes across all levels of governance.



Community members from Soso village in Tikina Naviti, are preparing the land for planting in 2015. (Photo: LLEE)

Communities can become more resilient to climate change and disasters if routine government, community and other planning takes these risks into account. This risk governance approach is delivered through a partnership between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and international non-government organisation Live & Learn Environmental Education (LLEE), and supported by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). PRRP is being delivered in four countries: Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

### Common goal to assist communities

*“Vinaka Fiji is involved with many partnerships with government, with the likes of PRRP, the community and NGOs as we all have a common goal: to assist local communities. We encourage partnerships like this between the public and private sectors, that look at all aspects of food security and even financial planning.”*

- Elanoa Vakabunoya Nimacere, Operations Manager Vinaka Fiji

### Linking with communities and networks

Seven villages in the Yasawas will be targeted over 2015 for the Food Bank initiative, starting in Soso and Kese villages of Naviti Island, where there are some already existing farmer networks, including disaster risk committees, village development committees and agriculture committees.

The Food Banks will also complement and link with agriculture Knowledge Hubs planned for the Yasawas. Knowledge Hubs comprise a network of community farmers who use a demonstration plot to learn and share risk-sensitive farming information and technology, such as traditional disaster-safe methods, organic approaches, mixed cropping, and climate resilient crops. They are established through a partnership between agriculture ministries and communities, with support from PRRP.

### Elders support the programme

*“In Kese, there was a meeting at the village hall and there was a big turn out, including the village elders who were very supportive of the programme. Similarly in Soso, it was well received by the villagers including the High Chief – who is the chief of seven villages.”*

- Lanietta Tokalauvere, PRRP LLEE Local Level Coordinator

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### OVERVIEW

- Seven villages in the Yasawa Islands to benefit from food banks
- 141 households in Soso and Kese villages leading project: 2 acres of land cleared in March
- Risk-resilient crop planting, crop storage, financial management part of initiative

### Vinaka Fiji

The Vinaka Fiji Trust coordinates volunteer programs in Fiji's remote Yasawa Islands to provide basic needs such as fresh water, nutrition, power supply and education to 15 remote communities in the Yasawa Islands.

Through fundraising and volunteering, Vinaka Fiji aims to improve the provision of basic needs and amenities for villages throughout the Yasawa Islands. It seeks to do this both through direct aid and by acting as a facilitator, bringing those who can help – such as the Government and PRRP – together with the landowners and residents.

Vinaka Fiji works directly with the Yasawa Island communities so that the villagers are involved in determining their needs, participate in the planning and implementation and share responsibility for completion of the projects embarked upon.

Volunteer programs are organized through Awesome Adventures Fiji, one of Vinaka Fiji's main sponsors.



Villagers are involved in Food Bank planning and preparation. (Photo: Vinaka Fiji)