



## Vuinadi Youth committed to farming



MoA Official Mr. Niraj Lal (middle) with Vuinadi farmers at their Yaqona farm.

The Farm Management training provided by the Ministry of Agriculture back in 2017 led a group of youths to realize the potential of farming as a business.

Vuinadi village is one of the 6 villages and 15 settlements that belong to the district of Koroalau and lies along the amazing Natewa Bay in the Province of Cakaudrove in Vanua Levu.

The district and Vuinadi village has the capability and potential to produce Dalo and Yaqona for the export market but are confined to the traditional farming practice.

Although this has been providing the necessities of life to the villages there was still a need to further enhance their engagement in farming.

In July 2017, the Farm Management training by the Ministry of Agriculture changed the mindset of the Vuinadi villagers for a better future.

The assistant project manager of

the group Mr. Jasa Kadivuka said the training provided by the Ministry of Agriculture led us map out what we can change and start a group farm that will benefit everyone.

The Farm Management training by the North team was based on implemented capacity building on farming as a business and Sustainable Land Management practices to the villagers.

Farm Management Officer (North) Niraj Lal said the training was to capacitate the farmers hence to up-skill the knowledge and build modern techniques in the agriculture business.

"There is a lot of potential for this area and tuning them in the right direction to see the bigger picture was essential," said Niraj.

"The training was coupled with tree and root crops for food security awareness, farming to meet local market demand and most importantly to plan and manage their farms," he said.

"The training in farming as a business to farmers created awareness amongst them that there was a lot of potential to extend farming and focus on development towards agricultural business," said Niraj.

Through this training, the villagers of Vuinadi communally agreed to work together hence the formation of the youth group.

The Vuinadi Yaqona Farmers Group unites on the Project Matakavou with the vision "Ko Vuinadi Kei Karisito, Kina Mataka Vou".

The village project was established in 2017 by the farmers group that started with 38 members and a piece of land that was identified in Warikoko for the project Matakavou and the group planted 1,000 yaqona plants to start with.

"Starting was hard as we had to keep motivating members and the planting materials were hard to obtain and encountering natural disaster along the way, we managed

to pull through," said Jasa.

"The 1,000 yaqona planted was part of our five year plan to plant 3,000 yaqona plants in 2017 for the project and continue every year," he said.

The unity was such that farmers set aside Tuesday as the day to come together and attend to the project site with a contribution of \$5.00 per farmer, revenue that was directed to the needs of the project.

Three years later the group that started with 1000 yaqona plants and 38 members have bloomed with the increase in the members to 43 including the women and the project now has more than 3,000 three-year-old yaqona plants, 6,000 two-year-old and 2,000 one-year-old yaqona plants.

"All this have been decided and agreed upon that it will be used in the obligations of the church, the Vanua and the government and the tuitions of the children," he said.

"No harvesting will be done in the duration of the five years, we only have to increase the number of yaqona plants and the area planted."

"We are doing what we love and loving what we do, seeing what is on the ground now we are thankful that we took the leap of faith back in 2017," said the grateful Jasa.

Although the farmers of Vuinadi have agreed on a mutual project, they were also affirmed of the continuation of the achievement of their individual farming objectives.

"This five year project is for the village and all its needs and the members also have their individual farms that they toil and it is amazing to see the urgency to farm in each individual," he said.

In addition to their yaqona farm,

the group has also planted dalo and cassava for the use of the members, payment of transportation to the farm and for village functions.

"Because of this COVID-19 restriction we could not visit the farm and it has been unsettling us so decided to draw a timetable of the required number of members to clean the farm," he said.

Another bonus to their development was the provision of the farm house, the distance of the farm from the village is quite far and having this farm house enables them to spend more time on the farm and save the hustle of having to travel far.

"The training opened our minds into what we can achieve through the formation of a cluster group and that is to sustain the future development of Vuinadi through agriculture," he said.

"I would like to thank the elders for allowing us this privilege and would also like to commend the tireless effort of the villagers and the group members for not quitting along the way despite many obstacles."

"We are grateful to the Ministry of Agriculture for the training and the refresher course in 2018 and the locality officer for her frequent visits," he said.

"We might be moving slowly but we will get there by the grace of God, he is our leader and we entrust our farming visions with him," he said.

"I urge the people that have not planned anything as such, to make the wise decision to form groups in the villages and make plans and equip yourselves with farm management skills, it also takes perseverance and dedication so put God first and your heart into it all will go well," said Jasa.

## Importance of Kavalactone

### Kavalactone Content

The physiological effects of kava are usually viewed as an important characteristic of kava quality amongst customers, alongside characteristics such as where it was grown, taste and cleanliness. The effect of the kava drink is determined by chemicals called kavalactones. There are 6 major kavalactones namely Kavain, Methysticin, Yangonin, Dihydro kavain, Dihydromethysticin and Desmethoxy yangonin.

The chemotype or kavalactone profile in the laboratory is then determined by ranking the proportions of six kavalactones from highest to the lowest amount (i.e. in descending order). For example, kava with a chemotype of 426531 has high concentrations by kavain (KAV), followed in decreasing concentrations by dihydro kavain (DHK), methystiin (METH), dihydromethystiin (DHM), yangonin (YAN) and desmethoxy yangonin (DMY).

**Table 1:** Variety and Chemotype of Fijian Kava, based on preliminary analysis by the USP IAS laboratory and single samples of different varieties sent to Herb Research (Germany).

	VARIETY	IAS-CHEMOTYPE	GERMANY
1.	Vula Kasa Leka	426531 (Lewena)	426531
		426531 (Waka)	
2.	Vula Kasa Balavu	426351 (Lewena)	
		426531 (Waka)	
3.	Dokobana Loa	426351 (Lewena)	426531
		426531 (Waka)	
4.	Dokobana Vula	426531 (Lewena)	426351
		463251(Waka)	
5.	Damu	426351 (Lewena)	426531
		462351 (Waka)	
6.	Loa Kasa Balavu	426531 (Lewena)	
		462351 (Waka)	
7.	Loa Kasa Leka	426531 (Lewena)	426531
		462351 (Waka)	
8.	Matakaro Leka	426531 (Lewena)	426531
		462351 (Waka)	
9.	Matakaro Balavu	426351 (Lewena)	426531
		462351 (Waka)	
10.	Qila Balavu	426531 (Lewena)	462351
		462351 (Waka)	
11.	Qila Leka	246531 (Lewena)	426531
		426531 (Waka)	
12.	Yonolulu	426351 (Lewena)	462351
		46235(Waka)	
13.	Yalu	462351 (Lewena)	426531
		426351 (Waka)	

Source: Fiji Kava Quality Manual, 2017

### Disaster Risk and Climate Change tips:

- Yaqona is very prone to wind damage and lots of damage arises during tropical cyclones.
- Replanting is encouraged immediately after cyclones to avoid deterioration of kasa (stem cuttings).
- In disaster prone areas, plant Yaqona as part of a multi-crop food garden (with coconut,

yams, cocoa and coffee.

- Can be a good source of income after disaster, with the sales of cuttings and dried roots (waka) and stumps (lewena).
- Mulch to keep soil moisture in severe drought period, prune field-grown plants extensively by removing large leaves to reduce evapotranspiration rates.



A yaqona nursery.