



TV

UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

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Length: 3'50"

UN SUPPORTS ORCHID BUSINESS IN FIJI

VIDEO

ORCHIDS (23")

GIRLS WITH ORCHIDS (12")

AILEEN BURNES ON CAMERA
(13")

LARGE GREENHOUSE (11")

AUDIO

NARRATION

One of the world's most popular flowers, orchids have fascinated people since the earliest times. They have been associated with love, luxury, beauty, virility and gentleness. With over 25 thousand naturally occurring species and 100 thousand registered hybrids, they are the largest family of flowers on the planet.

Throughout the Pacific Islands, these flowers are used for body ornaments and in births, weddings and death ceremonies. And orchids are big business, says expert Aileen Burness.

BURNES:

"The orchid growers, they produced and we sold one hundred thousand sprays of orchids. Now that money was all left in Fiji for the growers."

NARRATION

Aileen knows a lot about these flowers. Her

company, South Sea Orchids, is the biggest domestic supplier of cut flowers in the Fiji Islands, a South Pacific nation.

AILEEN AND ORCHIDS (23")

Aileen wants to pass on the secrets of how to grow these beautiful flowers and, at the same time, use them to make a living. She approached the Fijian Government and the UN Development Programme, UNDP, with a project whereby her company assisted women growers to obtain bank loans for shade houses, planting materials and provided training workshops and technical advice.

LARGE GROWER (12")

Each grower became an independent business in itself. Verona Lucas has 4,000 orchids of the Dendrobium variety. But most women plant much smaller quantities.

VILLAGE (8")

Natalau, a village of 300 people in Western Fiji is becoming well known countrywide thanks to the production of orchids.

WOMEN TALK (11")

Ten small entrepreneurs here have benefited from the project. The money generated by the flower business is a most welcome extra source of income for their families.

WOMEN AND ORCHIDS (7")

The plants take 12 months to flower. The women help each other by exchanging experiences and techniques.

MATAIKA WITH ORCHIDS (14")

Mataika Saukuru has been growing orchids since

1999. She has 200 plants in the garden next to her home. The village's land belongs to the entire community, but each woman keeps the profits of their labour.

MATAIKA AT HOME (9")

A mother of two, Mataika used the income generated by the flowers to buy food and housing improvements. She is delighted to participate in the project.

MATAIKA SAUKURU ON CAMERA (8")

SAUKURU:

"My husband was the only one working in the family. He was the only breadwinner in the family, so I decided to plant orchids to help him."

FLOWER ARRANGEMENT (22")

NARRATION

South Sea Orchids guarantees the purchase of the women's entire production. The business is booming. They are now preparing to export the flowers to Australia. As a result of this project, the life of dozens of families throughout Fiji have improved. UNDP's Pacific Sustainable Livelihoods Programme Chief, Jeff Liew.

JEFF LIEW ON CAMERA (12")

LIEW:

"Invariably, the first profit is always invested in the home and you will notice that we work primarily with women and we know for a fact that women invest more in their families."

NARRATION

SUVA AND FLOWER SHOP (17")

Fiji is an important tourist destination and the service industry is a significant outlet for these flowers. The potential for growth is enormous. Orchids are much cheaper to produce locally than roses. And for many they are just as pretty...

UN LOGO (20")

This report was prepared by Chaim Litewski for the United Nations.