

Biausevu Village Workshop Report



Compiled by:

*4th - 14th June
2007*

Ms Niqa Tuvuki
Senior Cultural Development Officer

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BIAUSEVU VILLAGE WORKSHOP (Basket Weaving and Jewelry Making) 4th – 14th June, 2007

INTRODUCTION

Traditional handicrafts play a very important role in any traditional setting. The technique of their application indicates the status of the wearer or of the recipient in a particular ceremony, for example, welcome-home ceremonies (*vakasenuqanuqa*), weddings, installation of a chief, burial and lifting of mourning, (*Vakataraisulu*).

The quality and quantity of handicraft's displayed on any such occasion reveals social status in Fiji. Originally, all handicrafts were offered to the chiefs and vanua for functional purposes such as *solevu* and for barter system.

To complement the revival of traditional handicraft manufacture, the processes should be documented for educational purposes and for future reference. The manual is designed in the hope of providing guidance in the basic skills involved to individual artists at home or in institutions at all levels and to any other interested parties.

The manual concentration on simple weaving, pottery and masi making which are indigenous to Fiji.

A simple fact is that most of these traditional art forms are dying out, for example Sabina Salote 74, in the village of Biausevu explained that they have no knowledge in any handicrafts but they do always purchased crafts from Jacks in Sigatoka, to sell to tourist.

During a discussion in a village meeting in Biausevu on Thursday 24th May, 2007 it was obvious that Biausevu already operates a small Waterfall Tour which is a 2km walk from the village, through their native forest along to the Savunamateya Waterfall. At the end of the tour the tourist were able to buy handicrafts from the village women, for example shell jewelry, artifacts, etc. It was also evident in this village meeting that the Department of Culture's role in the Cultural authenticity component of the tours is vital to come on board now and not to leave it for sometime.

The Fiji Arts Council with the support of the Department of Culture and Heritage and the USP Inter Agency Tourism task force (members of which are Ministry of Forestry's and Ministry of Tourism) conducted a workshop as identified by the villages of Biausevu the need for the revival of handicraft skills to produce tourism products to support the new village tourism project.

The villages admitted that the handicrafts are not made locally, but they are been bought from commercial stores in Sigatoka and Nadi, but was sold at a high price

to the tourist. The truth of their culture is in danger of being damaged if people from these villages present products which are not authentic or significant to them and most of all, loosing their knowledge and skills for making handicrafts not only for selling to tourists but for recognizing and retaining their cultural identity.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim and objectives of such workshops are to assist participants in the following:

- To create opportunity for the members of the different villages to become involved in the tourism interpretation project which will also improve the authenticity and quality of the products sold to tourist.
- Encourage self development to improve their ways and means of living.
- Learn subsidiary skills that would supplement existing traditional practices, on the verge of disappearance, in terms of economic survival, in the long term. For instance, jewellery making and basket weaving.
- Expressing a better understanding of the cultural significance of the handicrafts.



Finished Products on display

OFFICIAL OPENING

The Marama Nai Vakatawa from Biausevu was invited to officially open the two week workshop on Monday the 4th June, 2007 at 11.30am where the participants from the four participating villages converged.

She also stressed to the participants the importance of learning and grasping everything they had at the workshop from the selected resource people.



Women preparing for the workshop

The Senior Cultural Development Officer from the Department of Culture and Heritage after introducing the two facilitators, emphasized to village women the importance of our culture and traditions that uniquely identifies us from the rest of the world and stressed that the participants concentrate and cooperate with the two facilitators for the duration of the workshop.

Also present at the official opening of the workshop were staff from the Department of Culture & Heritage, University of the South Pacific and Fiji Arts Council with the Turaga ni Koro, village elders, youths and Na Turaga na Tui Vusu.

The Chief Guest thanked the Ministry of Fijian Affairs through the Department of Culture and Heritage for organizing such workshops for the people of the Nadroga province.

METHODOLOGY – 2 WEEKS PROGRAM

Day 1 – 4th June 2007

Opening of the Biausevu/Namada workshop

8.00am

The team from the Department of Culture and Heritage together with the two facilitators, Mrs Finau Mara and Mrs Varanise Vauora and as well the two reps from the Tourism Interpretation steering committee in USP, Mr Isoa Koroiwaqa and Ms Sally Patterson left for Biausevu for the workshop.

10.30am

The team arrived in Biausevu followed by a Sevusevu by Inoke Rokotuinamata to the Tui Vusu. From the Valelevu, the team made their way down to the village hall for the official opening.



All smiles at the workshop

11.30am

Marama Nai Vakatawa were glad to be the chief guest. Quoted from her speech she “stated that the ladies should conquer something out from the end of the workshop.”

The Senior Cultural Development Officer (SCDO), Ms Niqa Tuvuki emphasized to the Village women the importance of our culture and traditions we are known of

as Fijians. She said “the participants would cooperate by all means in this 5 days workshop, and members were looking forward to seeing a good outcome after the workshop.”

To continue, she said “we should not be embarrassed to preach out to the tourist our traditional and customs.”

The facilitators were introduced by SCDO and the participants were divide into 2 groups.

❖ **1.30pm Lunch**

- ❖ At 1.30 lunch were prepared by the village youths as they volunteered to cater for the one week workshop. Delicious Fijian foods were served and it was served with a traditional smile and attraction bula shirt and Sulu worn by them.



- ❖ 2.30pm the workshop resumes.
- ❖ 4.00pm – the SCDO and the 2 representatives from USP left for Suva.

- ❖ 6.30pm the first day workshop ended but the participants still continue to



complete what was taught to them during the day. Most ladies resisted going home since it was the first workshop as such was ever done in the village and they were eager to know how baskets and jewelers were done.

- ❖ As day end, I interviewed the 2 facilitator's to how the first day went and they stated that its hard to teach the ladies because most of

them don't know how to weave, but from the jewellery makers she was happy to see that the participants had completed what was taught to them.

- ❖ Thirty one (31) participants were registered at the end of day 1.

7.30pm - Dinner

Day 2: 5th June 2007 workshop, Namada/Biausevu

The workshop started off with a prayer and a hymn from a participant at 8.30am. The ladies continued what they left off from day one.

From what I saw during my stay with them, the participants were eager to learn the skills and complete the craft's before the end of the first week of the workshop.

At the end of the second day, 33 participants were confirmed and registered to be part of the workshop.



Day 3 : 6th June 2007 workshop, Namada/Biausevu

The workshop started off with a normal Programme which was a morning devotion than the workshop continued.

11.00am – The SCDO Ms Niqa Tuvuki arrived into the village to await for the team from Fiji TV (Noda Gauna) to take shootings and conducted interviews during the workshop.

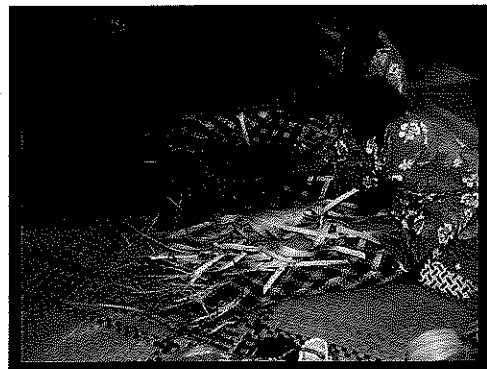
Day 4: 7th June 2007 workshop, Namada/Biausevu

7.00am – Breakfast

8.00am – workshop starts with morning devotion. The Fiji TV, Noda Gauna Programme started off with interviewing the participants.

11.30am – the tour up to the Savunamatelaya waterfall.

**Day 5: 8th June 2007 workshop,
Namada/Biausevu**



End of the First week workshop.

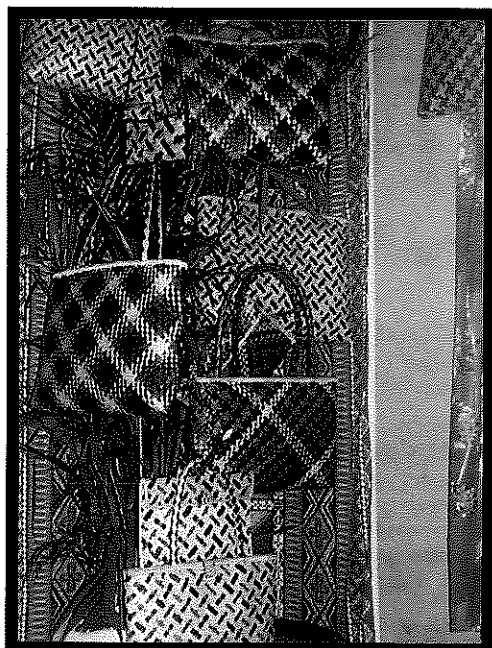
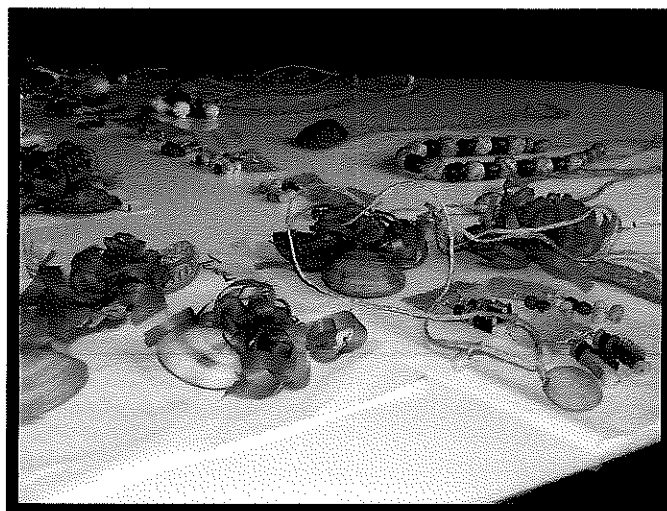


**Day 6: 11th June 2007 workshop,
Namada/Biausevu**

Begin of the second week of the workshop.

Serenia Sarogo shows her work.

Day 7: 12th June 2007 workshop, Namada/Biausevu



Day 8: 13th June 2007 workshop, Namada/Biausevu

At the second last day of the workshop, participants made their way down to the village hall early hrs in the morning to finish before the 2 weeks workshops end.

Day 9: 14th June 2007 workshop, Namada/Biausevu

CLOSSING DAY



The Fiji Arts Council with the Department of Culture and Heritage had initially invited the Manager Eco Tourism, Mr Kasimino Taukeinikoro to officially close the two day workshop. In his speech he said "that tourist is the biggest income into the country second to Sugar and it also brings changes to our culture, for example the way we dress, our traditional activities, etc". He also mentioned that, the Ministry of Tourism through the Eco- Tourism

sector, also has allocated funds to develop community project's on tourism which the community can access to .

PARTICIPANTS

There were thirty three (33) participants who attended the workshop. Out of those 33 participants, 19 were from Biausevu, 11 from Namada, 2 from Votualailai and only 1 manage to make it from Namatakula.

The workshop was conducted at the village of Biausevu.

Participants representing their respective villages were taught the skills of basket weaving and jewelry making by the two master crafts women identified by the Fiji Arts Council.



Jewelry on display at the workshop

RESOURCE PERSON

Basket weaving – Finau Mara

Ms Finau Mara is a professional basket weaver and comes highly recommended by the Fiji Arts Council. Her creativity and professionalism in the weaving of her baskets, has given her the recognition as one of the best basket weavers in the Pacific and she has won various awards such as the craftswoman of the year Award in 1998 and has represented Fiji at many regional and international vents. In basket weaving, Finau used voivoi (somo, paogo, vulavula)



Finau Mara demonstrating how it's done

Jewelry Making – Varanise Vauoro

Varanise Vauoro has participated in various craft fairs organized by the Fiji Arts Council and has won various prizes at these craft fairs for many years and she had represented Fiji at the 3rd Melanesian Arts Festival held in Suva last year.



Varanise demonstrating how its done

In jewelry making, Varanise used sea shells, beads, wavau, magimagi and crepe paper that was used to color the wavau.

The ability for these two women to use their gifts and expertise in sharing their knowledge and techniques was a boost to all women who participated in the

workshop, giving them the encouragement to use their natural resources around them and also to undertake basket weaving and jewelry making as means of self employment in the tourism market.



Recommendations:

- 1.0 Continuously promote the documentation of our ancestral past and to promote the preservation of our traditions and culture since our generations are more accustomed to western and urban cultures.
- 2.0 More workshops of this kind to be conducted around the areas of tourist attractions e.g. Nadroga, Nadi and Yasawa.
- 3.0 Follow up visit by staff of the Fiji Arts Council and the Department of Culture and Heritage.
- 4.0 The participants to be encouraged to participate in local craft fairs for the promotion of their skills
- 5.0 Set up of an art & craft committee within the Tikina to assist FAC in making proper decision to enhance and develop art and craft in the area and finding possible outlets elsewhere.

FINANCE

**** See Appendix 2 for Financial Statement of Accounts.***

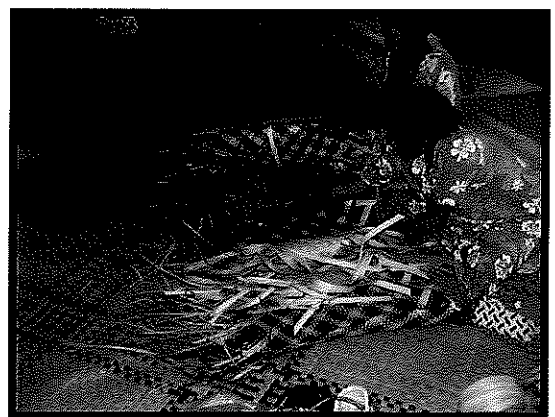
CONCLUSION



Biausevu village has the potential to develop through its Eco Tourism project – the Biausevu Waterfall Tour which is a 2km walk from the village through their native forest along to the Savunamateya Waterfall which was operational prior to the workshop.

The workshop was a successful one for the Fiji Arts Council and the University of the South Pacific and mainly for the people of Biausevu and its surrounding villages in terms of how the workshop was implemented and through the knowledge and skills gained from the workshops; which was an opportunity to use their new skills to supplement the income generated from their heritage site skills

PHOTOS FROM THE WORKSHOP



**Namada/Biausevu Workshop
4th - 14th, June 2007**

	NAME	AGE	VILLIAGE	PARTICIPATION
1	Mereia Rakuro	39	Biausevu	Jewlery Making
2	Lavenia Viravu	52	Biausevu	Basket Weaving
3	Alumita Wage	30	Biausevu	Jewlery Making
4	Verenaisi Matabogi	42	Biausevu	Jewlery Making
5	Miriam Duwailea	60	Biausevu	Basket Weaving
6	Vilisi Boti	49	Biausevu	Jewlery Making
7	Sabina Salote	74	Biausevu	Basket Weaving
8	Matelita Domedome	40	Biausevu	Basket Weaving
9	Mariana Naciwai	39	Biausevu	Basket Weaving
10	Dilaite Wesikana	40	Biausevu	Basket Weaving
11	Alumeci Sigavinaka	27	Biausevu	Basket Weaving
12	Finau Sorovanalagi	47	Biausevu	Jewlery Making
13	Lino Sorogo	27	Biausevu	Jewlery Making
14	Serenia Sarogo	39	Biausevu	Basket Weaving
15	Ruci Momoyalewa	26	Biausevu	Basket Weaving
16	Merina Finau	75	Biausevu	Jewlery Making
17	Adi Caginatoba	39	Namada	Jewlery Making
18	Sereima Tabaiwalu	57	Namada	Basket Weaving
19	Vivita Kunahau	45	Namada	Basket Weaving
20	Marica Kunibola	29	Namada	Jewlery Making
21	Esita Lagimama	50	Namada	Jewlery Making
22	Ana Laqai		Namada	Jewlery Making
23	Saivora Tatahila	46	Namada	Jewlery Making
24	Alena Tuinawailevu	60	Namada	Basket Weaving
25	Sainamilika Tavaga	36	Namada	Basket Weaving
26	Litia Waqa	36	Namada	Basket Weaving
27	Ivamere Lala	63	Namada	Basket Weaving
28	Verenaisi Tani	37	Namatakula	Jewlery Making
29	Maraia Taniteagane	60	Votualailai	Jewlery Making
30	Ana Diligo	58	Votualailai	Basket Weaving
31	Rosa Kato	46	Biausevu	Basket Weaving
32	Alitia Naivalu		Biausevu	Jewlery Making
33	Susi Tani	27	Biausevu	Jewlery Making

Biausevu - 19 Participants

Namada - 11

Votualailai - 2

Namatakula - 1

BIAUSEVU BASKET WEAVING & JEWELLERY MAKING WORKSHOP

4TH – 14TH JUNE, 2007

FINAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Fees for Resource Persons – 2 x 9days x \$100 per day	\$1,800.00
Food for Participants - 9 days	1,400.00
Transport cost for Participants	280.00
Basket weaving materials	475.26
Jewellery making materials	210.23
Yaqona	115.00
Stationeries	224.00
Meal Allowance for support staff	234.00
Transport cost for Resource Person - 1 st & 2 nd week	245.00
Overtime & Meal Allowance for staff	766.10
Fuel – GM895 – Opening, Closing & Visits during the workshop	240.15
Office Taxi runs	67.37
Telephone Recharge Cards	10.00
Closing of Workshop – Transport cost for Staff	250.00
LHT Officer - Awareness – Biausevu	50.00
Vakavinavinaka – Meke	40.00
TOTAL	\$6,407.00