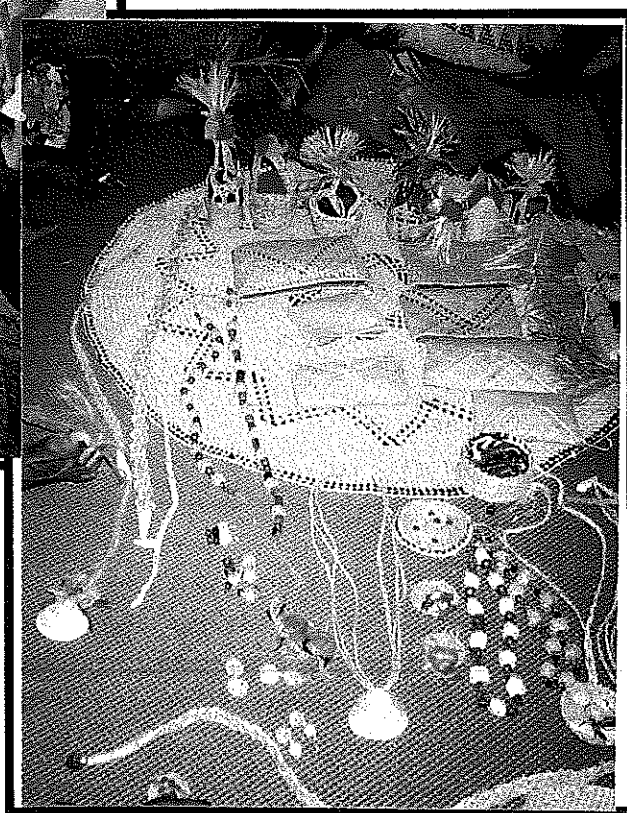


**REPORT OF
WORKSHOP PROCESS IN
HANDICRAFT TRAINING –to enable women
from Navakasobu and Korovuli to acquire skill
and techniques in creating a variety of saleable
products from kuta offcuts
(22nd – 26th March 1999)**



TUESDAY 20TH APRIL 1999

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FUNDED AND ORGANISED BY:



WORLD WIDE FUND
FOR NATURE



FIJI ARTS COUNCIL



FORUM SECRETARIAT

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The workshop was organised and funded by the World Wide Fund for Nature, as part of '9P 0027.02: Fiji Partnerships for Conservation and Development, and '9P 0028.03: Pacific People and Plants: applying customary knowledge of use and practices to support sustainable use and protection of community forests projects. Also by Fiji Arts Council and the Forum Secretariat.

REPORT OF WORKSHOP PROCESS IN HANDICRAFT TRAINING –to enable women from Navakasobu and Korovuli To acquire skill and techniques in creating a variety of saleable products from *kuta* offcuts

- I** The handicraft training workshop is the means by which the project has taken to enable the women of Navakasobu and Korovuli villages to acquire techniques in creating a variety of small items from *kuta* offcuts that have sale potential. In utilising cuttings from *kuta* mats that would otherwise be discarded, to create products for sale, there is maximum utilisation of the plant as well as generating income for the women.

With a resource that the community associate with, with great pride, and the associated skill in it's use, that provides part of the identity of the community as well as providing the women with an independent income; it is almost assured that the conservation of that plant and its habitat will be actively pursued.

The training workshop is part of the Pacific People and Plants : applying customary knowledge of use and practices to support sustainable use and protection of community forests and the Fiji Partnership in Conservation and Development Project

II Project Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of the project is poverty prevention and alleviation through the effective conservation and sustainable use of Melanesian forests by customary resource owning communities.

The major objectives are :

1. To facilitate the wider integration of customary plant uses and practises
2. To facilitate habitat conservation and income generation based on local knowledge and needs
3. To provide the means for self replication of ethnobotanical activities and outputs

III Workshop Objectives

- 1 To enable women from project community to acquire skill and techniques in creating potentially saleable products from *kuta* offcuts and discards.
- 2 To enable women to earn from sale of their handicrafts, enabling them to see the potential in income generation in *kuta* offcuts
- 3 To link women to potential buyers of their products

IV Workshop Materials

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ↳ <i>kuta</i> (whole and offcuts) | * paint brushes |
| ↳ Somo (black voivoi) | * canvas needles |
| ↳ Paogo | * vau (<i>Thespiea populnea</i> fibres) |
| ↳ Spray paints (green & brown) | * seeds, pine cones, shells |
| ↳ PVA Glue | * paper, pens |
| ↳ Varnish | * earring fittings |
| ↳ Paper for recycling | * Remains of colour crepe paper for dye |

V Outputs

- 1 Workshop report detailing workshop process in English
- 2 Workshop report detailing workshop process in Fijian
- 3 52 pieces of items produced & \$330.00 earned by the women
- 4 Identify market sources for the women.
- 5 Generation of order for products

11.00am	Tea while you work
1.00pm	Lunch End of day three for non project women
Navakasobu/Korovuli Village Women to continue	
2.00pm	Talitali documentation
3.00pm	FBC Visit
4.00pm	Recycling of waste paper – step 2 Dyeing of <i>kuta</i>
5.30pm	I Kavv from <i>kuta</i> offcuts
7.30pm	Dinner
Thursday 25 th March	
8.30am	Devotion Recap of synthesis of day three (Niqa Nakalevu)
9.00am	Weaving of <i>kuta</i> Grp 1 (Finau Mara) – <i>kuta</i> gift boxes (soap, biscuits, oil) Grp 2 (Alumita) – Wallhangings Grp 3 (Seniloli) – Workshop satchel Grp 4 (Varanise) – Broaches and beads
11.00am	Tea while you weave
1.00pm	Lunch End of day for non project women
Navakasobu/Korovuli Women to continue	
2.00pm	Visit to Suva Flea Market
3.00pm	Recycling of waste paper – step 4 Cutting and writing on recycled paper Last touch to exhibition articles (i.e. I Kavv)
4.00pm	Talitali mada Continue documentation of <i>kuta</i> weaving process Photo Sessions
6.30pm	Dinner
Friday 26 th March	
8.00am	Set up the display of handicrafts, photos, documentation etc (Penina Namata and Participants)
9.20am	Participants to be seated, guest arrive
9.30am	Welcome
9.40am	Brief on purpose of workshop (Kesaia Tabunakawai)
9.50am	The white heron. The black heron. (Meke)
10.15am	Introduce Chief Guest, Forum Secretariat Representative Mr. Edgar Cocker (Penina Namata)
10.20am	Closing of workshop and opening of display (Edgar Cocker)
10.35am	Acknowledgements by Participants (Adi Nomai)
10.45am	Remarks (Penina Namata)
11.00am	EXHIBITION OPEN
1.00pm	Exhibition Closed End of day five and workshop.

Elenoa Qatia	Nailuva	Wailevu	Sega	Sega
Sally Nixon	Suva	England	Sega	Sega
Yvonne Filipe	Lami	Fiji	Sega	Sega
Jean Egan	Suva	Australia	Sega	Sega
Lanie Ta Balemila		Tavua	Sega	Sega
Adi Kelera Ratu		Tavua	Sega	Sega
Lolo Cocker				
Penina Naniata				
Jacqueline Hardy	Suva	England	Sega	Sega
Savu	Nadonumai	Moce Lau	Sega	Sega
Vuniamatana				
Mei Tataka	Nadonumai	Tavuki, Kadavu	Sega	Sega
Jill	Suva	PNG	Sega	Sega

3 Structure of training

9.00am-1.00pm – The tutors (Seniloli, Alumita, Finau and Varanise) showed the women, hands on, their techniques of creating different shapes, turns in weaves, weaves to neaten joints, techniques to link different fibres and materials etc and the rationale for doing things in certain ways.

4 Activity: Weaving of purses, placemats, belts, neckwares

Each of the tutors had specific *kuta* items that they were to teach the participants to make and thus the participants were split into groups according to the *kuta* item they wished to be taught to make.

Seniloli's Group (Belts)

Adi Nomai
Sally Nixon
Lolo Cocker
Penina Namata
Kinisimere Ukumoce
Jean Egan

Alumita's Group (Placemats)

Adi Kelera Ratu
Volonia Vala
Elenoa Qatia
Talaite Kidakece

Finau Mara's Group (Purses)

Alisi Musudroka
Sereima Divavani

Varanise's Group (Necklaces, Earrings and Broaches)

Melaia Batisova

5 Evening Activities

Participants practised techniques learnt, to refine their new skills and techniques and thus increase the number of items produced for display and sale at the end of the workshop.

(i) Talanoa mada: Review of Action Plans (Penina Namata)

Review of action plans: Action plan for Feb – Mar done according to Draft Action Plan Navakasobu Village Women for Restoration of *kuta* Habitat (11/1 – 15/1 1999)

There was no need for plant nurseries as the women found lots of healthy seedlings already growing around their village

Navakasobu Action Plan: Restoration plans have begun on the Drano Laulevu. Feedback on what has been done in Navakasobu since the last workshop in January '99.

Question: What kind of activities have you been doing since our last workshop?

Answer: We have started planting trees at Drano Laulevu

Question: What kind of trees?

Answer: Mango, breadfruit, Pandanus, Jiale, Gandenias Berry, Kavika, Dralakaka, musiyuda (mussanda)

Question: All around?

Answer: No, only on one side of the drano. On the left when your back is towards the village

(ii) **Isa na Tadra**

Sereima's Group: Vision or Tatadra

In the future about 2005/2009 when the trees we planted this year are big and gives protection and shade to the drano. When the water is full to its brim and we see *kuta* once again tall, graceful and healthy, as it was in the early 70s.

We vision s lot of people just stopping by to watch the majestic, magnetic movement and rhythm of the *kuta* as it blows in the wind.

To make this dream a reality we have:

- ♦ Planted trees around the pond;
- ♦ Cleared the water lilies; and
- ♦ Planted new *kuta*.

Sinuwawa Group: Vision or Tatadra

In the year 2009 when the drano produces an abundant supply of *kuta*, the women will be able to meet all their obligations to the vanua/lotu and matanitu, there will be great happiness in the land.

We will not need to hire a van to go far to harvest, nor buy 'yaqona' to go to the other villages to 'kerekere', for right here on our doorsteps will be the tall, healthy *kuta* we remiember from years past.

kuta mat weaving will be a joy because of its great length and beautiful *kuta* mats will once again grace our chiefly homes, for it is for this task that we are renowned.

To make this dream a reality we have:

- ♦ Planted big native trees around the ponds (one side)
- ♦ Looked for ways to clean out the waterlillies from the ponds

Consulted with Turaga ni Yavusa and villagers for support

Update on 'Problems and Solutions' WWF side

Concerns (page 6)	Solutions Suggested	Action Taken after Jan '99
1. that many of the ponds are covered with water lily	- request advice from MAFF	- contact has been made with Mereseini Nagatalevu, who will be visiting shortly
2. Financial Resources	- how much money have we got and how can we afford to bring to the workshop	- reviewed the project budget and can finance 7 village women to travel to Suva for the workshop - consulted with Fiji Arts Council for the preparation of the workshop

(iii) **Paper Recycling – Step 2**

Continue paper recycling, dyeing and ironing (details explained in Fijian report)

(iv) **I Kavus**

Continuation of weaving I Kavus (special baby mats)

Wednesday 24th March 1999

8

Activity: Weaving of purses, wall hangings, belts, necklaces, broaches and beads

Seniloli's Group – Shell neckware, and belts *Ahumita's Group* – Wall hangings

Adi Nomai

Adi Kelera Ratu

Penina Namata

Volonia Vala

Jacqueline Hardy

Elenoa Qatia

Talaite Kidakece

Sally Nixon

(ii) **Paper recycling – Step 4**

Cutting and writing of recycled paper, labelling and last touch to exhibition articles. (Steps explained in Fijian Report)

(iii) **Photo sessions**

Photos taken of special *kuta* mats (1 kavus), also of the total exhibition pieces, and group photos of the women cradling babies on I Kavus, and a group photo of the seven participants.

Total pieces for exhibition

1 big mat	12 – I kavus
7 – purses	2 – bottle holders
7 – jam holders	3 – <i>kuta</i> beads
10 – pairs of earrings	5 – <i>kuta</i> pendants
1 – <i>kuta</i> carry all bag	2 – ornamental neckware
3 – Broaches	4 – Belts

Total number of pieces – 52

Friday 26th March 1999

12 Informal Speech to Women on Product Quality (Seniloli)

Good morning ladies, I am here earlier than usual today because I want to talk to you about the new world of marketing you are going to enter sometime soon.

Quality work is the trademark here and it is the only insurance to the future survival of your enterprise. Produce quality work and people will come looking for you. When your crafts are sold you are able to maintain for yourself some kind of financial independence that will give you strength to go on and produce more.

I know what I am saying here because I have been a crafts woman for a long time and I think this is vital information that you should know. I give it because I know that you need it and with these few words I wish you all the best in your *kuta* craft enterprise.

13 CLOSING PROGRAMME

(i) **Programme**

8.00 – 9.20	:	Set up of display – handicrafts, photos, documentation – participants & Penina Namata <i>vakarautaki ni vakaraitaki ni yaya tali mai na kuta, taba, vola ni veika baleta na kuta</i>
9.20 – 9.30	:	Participants to be seated; guests arrive <i>dabe me wawa na marama vuli; yaco mai na vulagi sureti</i>
	:	Garlanding <i>veivakasalusalutaki</i>
9.30	:	welcome <i>veikidavaki</i>
9.40 Kesaia	:	Brief on purpose of workshop <i>vakalekaleka ni - naki ni vuli</i>
9.50 – 10.10 Meke	:	The white heron. The black heron. <i>Na belo !</i>
10.15 MC	:	Introduce Chief Guest, Forum Secretariat Representative <i>veivakilitaki na vulagi dokai, Na vakaillesilesi ni Forum Secretariat, Mr. Edgar Cocker</i>

(v) Meke (Navakasobu and Korovuli Women)
Na belo ! The heron !

(vi) Introduction of Chief Guest, Forum Secretariat Representative, Mr. Edgar Cocker (Penina Namata)

I will call upon the Chief Guest, Mr. Edgar Cocker, representing the Forum Secretariat to close the workshop as well as open the craft display.

The Forum Secretariat in November 1997 organized a regional exhibition in Fiji as part of assistance in increasing technical capabilities of handicraft producers towards ability to meet marketing expectations.

(vii) Closing Speech: Edgar Cocker, Forum Secretariat
Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am extremely pleased to have the opportunity to be invited to close this important training program on processing of *kuta* in Fiji. This event is very important because it practically reveals the technical know-how of processing of such an important traditional knowledge. It may be considered as trade secrets, but on the other hand, it is an effort to promote its production and to share views and expertise, which in the long run will help improve both productivity and quality.

As you are aware, in the Pacific, traditional handicrafts have always been considered an important symbol of family achievement and status, which may be exchanged on ceremonial and other cultural occasions. Their significance as commercial products has been gradually increased during the late 70s and the early 80s, with the boom in the tourism industry, which has spread throughout the entire pacific region.

For us in the Pacific Islands, tourism has become a major and reliable source of income as tourists became attracted to our shores by the uniqueness of our islands, especially our serene and peaceful environment, and traditional cultural heritage. Migration too industrialised nations during the post colonial era, coupled with changing economic and social situations world-wide, have also created rewarding opportunities for developing and promotion of handicrafts as a promising industry.

These new social and economic factors have encouraged all handcraft producers to seek realistic economic prices for their products. Those values are directly reflected in the capability of the industry to create employment, increase export earnings, encourage saving, improve living standard at the grassroots level, generate revenue, and create other related industries.

Further significant steps towards handcraft development have been the increased emphasis upon product differentiation and diversification to suit exact need or specifications of the market. You must differentiate your product from the others, be creative and innovative and constantly say to yourself, how can I produce my *kuta* to be more appealing and suit what my target market needs.

The accessing of profitable markets for handcraft became extremely challenging as these markets become increasingly competitive, you are therefore faced with unexpected difficulties created by the sudden transition from producing traditional handcrafts to the production of commercial handcrafts. This is an outward export orientated outlook within which new attitudes and strategies must be designed and adopted.

In view of this important transition, a diagnostic study at the regional level should have been undertaken at the beginning of the 80s to identify difficulties and the likely consequences for the future of the changing nature of the market. As we are all aware, the handcraft industry continues to face wide ranging problems, such as:

- a) lack of product innovation to suit demand and international taste preferences;
- b) lack of understanding of right pricing;

necklaces, bottleholders and waist wrappers. All pieces were sold for over \$400.00 (less \$70.00 material cost)

Local orders for 15 pieces of *kuta* articles were placed with some of the women, from members of the public. The Museum, has also added the womens contact addresses to their list for future supplies.

An opening was made known to the women from Macuata of a particular *kuta* product that is in demand from Tongans, and which the women plan to follow up on. Findings from market research conducted by the project at the Government Handicraft Centre, Suva Flea Market and the Curio Handicraft Centre, in January '99, showed that 90% of all *kuta* sold in these centres was bought by the Tongans.

15 Acknowledgements

The Fiji Arts Council – for arranging for tutors, venue and providing morning teas, and for organising closing invitations.

The Fiji Museum – for permission to use part of the Museum premises as the workshop venue, and for support given by staff.

The Tutors (Seniloli, Finau, Alumita and Varanisese) – for sharing their weaving skills, also for their patience and support.

16 Photographic Section

Yvonne, Jean, Lolo, Seniloli, Adi Nomai,
Kinisimere and Sally - Weaving begins
Photo: WWF, J. Hardy



Talaite, Alumita, Elenoa, Volonia and
Adi Kelera – Weaving Placemats
Photo: WWF, J. Hardy



Sereima, Finau, Lanieta and Varanisese,
with *kuta* products
Photo: WWF, P. Blumel



Seniloli, Varanise and Mrs Esiteri
Kamikamica looking at the *kuta* display
Photo: WWF, P. Blumel



Dewala in *kuta*
wedding costume
Photo: WWF, P. Namata