



Natavea Bute Building Revival Workshop

Natavea Village, Naitasiri
3rd – 21st March 2003

REPORT

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NATAVEA BURE BUILDING REVIVAL WORKSHOP

REPORT

Introduction

The idea to revive the 'bure building skills' in the village of Natavea in Naitasiri, arose when the Eco Tourism arm of the Ministry of Tourism selected Natavea as a possible eco tourist attraction village.

As part of the project a Reception Area was required to be built to accommodate tourists for traditional ceremonies, meke performances and lunch. The structure was to be designed in bure style using traditional material for construction.

Upon enquiries made with some of the village elders it was discovered that the villagers had lost the skills of bure building. The reason for this was mainly due to a heavy flood which occurred in the mid-1960's which resulted in all their homes [mostly bure structures] being washed away. They then relocated to their present location which is on higher ground and the homes thus constructed were of concrete, timber and corrugated iron to withstand future disasters.

The Fiji Arts Council through the Department of Culture and Heritage was approached to conduct a workshop to teach and revive this lost skill to the villagers.

Participants

A total of thirty four [34] villagers from Natavea and surrounding villages participated. Participants were billeted at Natavea Village and meals were prepared by the women of the village.

Resource Person

Mr. Lasaro Delaibau from the village of was selected to conduct the workshop. He had been engaged by the Council as a Resource Person in previous workshops such as Wood Carving in Nukusa Village, Vanua Levu.

Duration

Three [3] weeks from 3rd - 21st March, 2003.

Materials

- ❖ Balabala from the forests around Natavea Village
- ❖ Makita stems and branches from Lomaivuna No 6
- ❖ Gaulo timber - long slender rods of timber from Lomaivuna No 6
- ❖ Misimisi [water reeds] from the river at Lomaivuna No.6
- ❖ Magimagi - Fiji Arts Council

- ❖ Green Bamboo - from nearby bush
- ❖ Large pebbles for 'yavu'
- ❖ Ordered materials:
 - galvanised nails
 - pine lining boards for doors
 - four [4] blade louvers with frame for windows [7 nos]
 - cement and sand

Methodology – 3 Week Program

Week 1

Site Preparation

The site was excavated to allow for a twenty five feet [25'] x twelve feet [12'] structure to be erected. The flooring was leveled off at two feet above the natural ground level and compacted firmly.

Raw Materials

The raw materials were gathered from the surrounding bush and forest and in some cases traveling several kilometers by carriers and transported back to Natavea.

Week 2

Frame Construction

- Timber was collected from the bushes and forests surrounding Natavea Village to be used for the columns, rafters and beams of the structure.
- The skin of the timber was removed using pieces of timber to beat it off.
- Columns were erected allowing for a six feet [6'] for the walls. Balabala was also used for the corner columns and to take the load bearing sections of the beams.
- Rafters were then secured to the beams with galvanized nails, allowing for an eighteen inches [18"] overhang.

Walls

- The green bamboo were cut into strips and plaited to form sections of walls in sizes of 6'x 8'. These were then secured in place with nails.

Roof

- Misimisi reeds were then bent over the gaulo branches which were secured to the rafters. The reeds were fixed in layers commencing from bottom level of the roof.

Week 3

Roof covering continued

Doors & Windows

Installed frames and fixed doors and window louvers

Yavu

Pebbles put in place with cement mortar around base of bure.

Finance

The budget for the project was calculated at \$5,000.00. Although the budget catered for the entire workshop some adjustments had to be made when the number of participants increased from 20 to 34. The 'veiqaravi' expenses immediately increased. Also, transport costs for materials increased due to raw materials being unavailable in some areas due to inclement weather. Nevertheless, cuts were made to other areas such as media expenses and FAC costs to meet these additional expenses.

The Final Statement of Accounts is annexed.

General Observations

- The workshop was conducted rather hastily with financial arrangements being made only a week before the program started.
- Fiji Arts Council should have been involved from the commencement of the project .
- Care should be taken to control number of participants in workshops i.e. proper ground work done before commencement and approval of budget.
- Workshops should be carried out in conjunction with other activities related to the objectives of the workshop eg for this project being a tourist attraction workshops in various forms of craft should have also been considered.

Conclusions

Given that the workshop got underway in a relatively short space of time the overall objective of teaching and passing on the lost skill of bure building was achieved. However, proper planning should be conducted well in advance with all stakeholders to avoid any problems that may arise.

The Resource Person conducted himself in a professional manner ensuring that each participant was given adequate instructions during the various phases of construction.

It was obvious from speaking to the participants, particularly the elderly men of Natavea Village, that the workshop was most welcomed and that they were very keen to revive the skill of bure building in the village.

The participation of several 20 year olds indicated that interest in traditional skills is being pursued amongst the younger generation.

Several participants from nearby villages [within a 20km range] expressed the desire to pass on the knowledge they had learnt to others in their respective villages.

Overall the workshop was a success, however, the points raised in the general observations above should be considered seriously for future workshops in which the Fiji Arts Council is involved.



Natavea Bure Building Revival Workshop, 2003

Statement of Accounts

Income

Cultural Grant	\$5,000.00
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Expenses

1. Fees for Resource Person	2,142.00
2. Closing of Workshop & Veiqaravi	1,900.00
3. Transport Cost for Participants	200.00
4. Transport Cost for Raw Materials	100.00
5. Purchase of Tabua and Cloth Materials	238.50
6. Tape for Digital Camera	17.95
7. Grog	55.00
8. Meal Allowance for Staff	91.50
9. Office taxi runs	33.05
10. Administration costs	222.00
	\$5,000.00



MINISTRY OF FIJIAN AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE & HERITAGE

Certificate of Participation

This is to certify that

**Livai Ratuniwai
of Natavea - i - Ra Village**

participated in the

"BURE BUILDING REVIVAL WORKSHOP"

**held at NATAVEA VILLAGE, NAITASIRI
3rd - 21st March, 2003**

.....
Mr. Peni Cavullagi
Director Culture & Heritage

.....
Mr. Michael Dennis
Chairman Fiji Arts Council











