



PRESS RELEASE
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Partners in Community Development Fiji

INTERNATIONAL TOURISM DAY 27 SEPTEMBER

GIANT STEPS FOR TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFTS AND HOTELS IN THE SERUA DISTRICT

Partners in Community Development Fiji partnered with the Department of Culture and Heritage and the Serua Provincial Office to facilitate the first skills revival handicraft workshop in the Serua District.

The workshop, attended by 49 men, women and youths, was designed to promote the use of local resources to make handicraft products to be marketed to local tourist establishments. The revival of local and traditional handicraft practices is high on the agenda at PCDF as it can also be used as an environmentally friendly source of income generation.

Chief guest at the closing of the workshop was Raumati Wikaire, Sales and Marketing Manager of The Pearl South Pacific in Pacific Harbour. Raumati Wikaire said: "We welcome partnerships with local communities and congratulated the people of Serua District for their efforts to venture into the business and marketing world. The revival of the traditional skills of Serua is fantastic news, it's a unique artwork with traditional legends attached to it."

The main handicraft skills taught during the week-long workshop were basket weaving, screen printing, jewelry making (from the natural resources available) and the revival of the pottery skills that Serua District was once famous for.

Matilita Kedrayate, NRM Coordinator says: “The Yanuca Island in the Serua District was once well known for its unique and highly skilled pottery production, this tradition and knowledge was lost years ago. By holding this craft workshop we hope to avoid the same thing happening with crafts in general throughout the District. It was a fun and productive week where men, women and youths came together to produce work, we hope we will be able to fund another soon”.

This handicraft workshop was a follow-on from a business workshop held in 2008 which stemmed from the women of Serua who learned to prepare various seaweed products such as soaps, massage oils, tonics, mayonnaise and a variety of dishes. They soon saw the opportunity to target nearby resorts as a potential outlet for their products. PCDF (and partners*) conducted this small business, financial literacy and good governance workshop to aid them on their journey.

This workshop was funded by AusAID under the AusAID Healthy Reefs project. PCDF would like to acknowledge the people of Serua District for making the most of this workshop; the Sales and Marketing Manager of Pearl South Pacific is also acknowledged for accepting the invitation to be chief guest at the workshop; the Department of Culture and Heritage and their resource persons for their contribution to the success of the workshop.

Ends

Editor’s Notes:

*Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS); University of the South Pacific, Lutu Cooperative and Serua Provincial Office.

Photo 1 (2501): Some of the traditional Fijian baskets woven by participants during the workshop.

Photo 2 (2491): A display of the traditional baskets, jewelry, tie-dyed and screen printed materials and pottery prepared during the 4 days workshop.

Photo 3 (2569): Workshop participants with Raumati Wikaire, Sales and Marketing Manager of Pearl South Pacific, at the end of the workshop.

For further information, photos or interview contact: Matilita Kedrayate on 3300392 extension 111 or email: mkedrayate@pcdf.org.fj

About Partners in Community Development Fiji:

PCDF holds a 30 year legacy of providing valuable lessons, guidance and most importantly, inspiration for the future. PCDF aims to assist the people of Fiji in all aspects of development; environmental, infrastructural, governmental and social.

Goals:

- ✓ Protect our coral reefs
- ✓ Conserve our fresh water
- ✓ Promote good governance
- ✓ Reduce the stigma attached to mental health issues
- ✓ Support sustainable livelihood initiatives

Partners in Community Development Fiji is one of Fiji's longest established development NGO's and is completely reliant on voluntary donations to continue its work.

Mission Statement - Working in partnership with communities to empower and assist with informed decision making for their own future development.

Partners in Community Development Fiji

8 Denison Rd, Suva

Phone: (679) 3314 160