

CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Fact Sheet

BACKGROUND

Culture serves as an integral element in the human resource development, embodying a source of identity, innovation and creativity that offers sustainable solutions to both local and global challenges. Fiji's cultural richness is derived from its diverse ethnicity, encompassing Melanesians, Polynesians, Micronesians and various other groups. While majority comprises indigenous Fijians (iTaukei and Rotuman), other ancestries including Indians, Chinese, and Europeans, Part Europeans, and other Pacific Islanders contribute to the nation's cultural mix of population. The distinctions between ethnic groups in Fiji is apparent in their diverse cultural traditions, customs and religions. The Department of Culture, Heritage and Arts in partnership with the three statutory bodies; National Trust Fund, Fiji Museum and Fiji Arts Council facilitate cultural development through formulation of legislations, policies, plans and programs for all communities in Fiji.

CURRENT STATUS

Fiji Museum, the National Trust of Fiji, and the Fiji Arts Council are the flagship agencies for cultural and heritage development. The Department of Culture, Heritage, and Arts is responsible for developing cultural policies, fostering cultural education, increasing awareness of and encouraging participation in traditional customs and multiculturalism, including support for creativity.

The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs maintains the database for the iTaukei Culture, Language & Arts Cultural Mapping Programme information collected from the provinces. In implementing the cultural mapping programme, researchers concede that there is a need to safeguard skills and knowledge required to perform arts, thus the initiative to record Living Human Treasures (LHT). It entails the preservation of culture and language through weekly radio programme, Lialiaci quarterly publications, judging during provincial councils Festival, community and organizational awareness.

The Ministry of Multi-ethnic Affairs & Sugar Industry is coordinating the Fiji's Multi-ethnic

Framework to enable the Ministry to provide equitable opportunity for addressing the development needs of all diverse cultural communities in Fiji.

CHALLENGES

1. High number of vacant positions on customary titles continues to be hindrance in the cultural and village upkeep.
2. Climate change and natural disasters pose substantial threats to heritage sites and properties, potentially jeopardizing their outstanding universal values, including integrity, authenticity, and their potential for economic and social development on both local and international scales.
3. The global tourism market, particularly cultural tourism, stands as one of the largest and fastest-growing sector. Destinations worldwide are increasingly leveraging cultural and creative industries to enhance their appeal and marketability. The increasing use of culture and creativity to Fiji's market destinations is also adding to the pressure of differentiating regional identities and images.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Strengthening of the village bylaws to streamline environment education, improved production and consumption patterns, adoption of sustainable water management practices and energy efficiency can be a way forward.
2. There is a need to strengthen the financial and human capacity of the National Trust of Fiji and the Fiji Museum in natural and cultural heritage site conservations and conducting archaeological impact assessment by 2026.
3. As Fiji strives for modernization and economic development, the need to maintain balance between educational goals and preservation of cultural identity becomes increasingly important.

FUTURE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- **Promote, protect and enhance cultural practices, heritage and traditional knowledge for sustainable development.**
 - ✓ Review, relevant iTaukei Affairs Acts.
 - ✓ Review of Fiji Museum legislations and policies
 - ✓ Strengthen the financial and human capacity of the National Trust of Fiji and Fiji Museum, Fiji Art Gallery in natural and cultural heritage site conservation.
 - ✓ Mapping of cultural, heritage and artistic infrastructure and spaces in Fiji including the facilitation of master plans for future development.
 - ✓ Implementation Fiji National Cultural Policy 2023 -2024.
 - ✓ Strengthen village bylaws.
 - ✓ Development of the Fiji Culture Statistic Framework 2025.
 - ✓ Development of Fiji Cultural Industries Framework by 2025.
 - ✓ Conduct Archaeological Impact Assessments by 2026.
 - ✓ Finalize Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of culture (TKEC) as a law of Fiji by 2026.
 - ✓ Establish mechanism(s) to capture the traditional knowledge and skills of elderly citizens for future generations.
 - ✓ Establish a gazetting mechanism for national recognition of sites of archaeological and paleontological mechanism including the management of sites.
 - ✓ Development of Fiji's Multiethnic Framework.
 - ✓ Development of local branding products and crafts thorough use of local resources.
 - ✓ Finalization of National Arts Centre for Fiji.
 - ✓ Establish a Cultural Tourism Framework.

- ✓ Facilitate Fiji's representation at regional and international cultural festivals and expos for artistic development & marketability.
- ✓ Strengthen participation of resource owners and the indigenous community.
- ✓ Develop and maintain cultural sites, heritage spaces and associated infrastructure.