

Heritage Preservation in the Pacific Island States

PREMO (Preservation by the Museums of the Pacific Island States) 1994–1998 is a program for heritage preservation in 22 Pacific Island states. In this unique project, the professional staff from museums and cultural centers have established new directions for heritage preservation. Since the founding meeting, professionals in the region have insisted that collections preservation must always be linked to the preservation of living cultures. Conservation must also be linked at all times to the development of the entire museum, where funds are almost always inadequate.

What does this mean in results?

The most moving example was the closing session of a week-long seminar held in Noumea, New Caledonia, 1994. Elders from the local Kanak community held an Aé Aé ceremony on the museum grounds. Some 200 spectators participated as chiefs called out their lineage and musicians played flutes that had not been heard in



A kava drinking ceremony on the occasion of the founding of PIMA (Pacific Island Museum Association) at the UNESCO Pacific Museum director's Meeting tour of the Fiji Museum.

decades, followed by dance music on traditional instruments. It was the first time in living memory that such an event had been held in the capital.

There were also many other activities linked to museum and community development. To date, PREMO partners have:

- established the Pepperleaf Vine, a fax network between all museums and cultural centers in the 22 isolated nations in the region;
- published three issues of the first newsletter exclusively for and by regional heritage professionals;
- developed a database of 225 heritage professionals and institutions in the region, including a file of potential course instructors;
- with UNESCO, established a committee for a Pacific Islands Museum Association, which will be the first in the region;
- joined with UNESCO Pacific Regional Office to cooperate in museum development in the Pacific;
- included sessions on collections conservation, recording living cultures, tourism, preservation of traditional crafts and income from crafts, in a seminar on "Preservation of Heritage Records";
- with UNESCO, launched a children's poster competition (Our Culture, Our Heritage) in 15 nations;
- held an intensive one-week course for heritage professionals from the Pacific Islands, "Preserving the Pacific Traditions of Wood and Tapa" (organized by Cook Islands National Museum and ICCROM as an event for PREMO).

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Preserving Pacific Heritage Sites

PREMO will be holding a seminar on Preserving Pacific Heritage Sites in Palikir, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The seminar, which is being funded by FSM, UNESCO Pacific Office, the University of Canberra, and the World Monuments Fund, will be a two-week long course aimed at enabling heritage professionals in the Pacific to take a leading role in heritage site preservation in their home states.

The course will begin with an excursion to Nan Madol, a highly significant site near the city of Palikir, dating to 1,000 A.D. There will then be an introduction to the process and guidelines of heritage site manage-

ment, and a group exercise to Nan Madol as a case study. Participants will learn the principles of identifying heritage sites and conducting community consultation during the identification process. They will also learn how to establish significance and draft statements of significance. The course will include sections on legislation and administration to achieve World Heritage designation, and work to develop strategies for World Heritage designations. Participants will prepare site conservation plans, and work in groups to prepare management plans. Other course topics include site archeology, record systems, site collections and museums, conservation works and maintenance, and interpretation and visitor management.