

Aneityum hosts sustainable cultural heritage tourism workshop

ON SEPTEMBER 18-23 PEACE Corps Vanuatu and the Vanuatu Cultural Center facilitated a Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism Workshop in Uje Village, Aneityum.

The participants included Peace Corps Volunteers, Vanuatu Cultural Center Field Workers from six different islands as well as local tour operators from Tanna, Aneityum and Ambrym.

The aim of the workshop was to provide the participants with a framework to analyze and initiate cultural heritage tourism projects in their villages.

The program walked the participants through a five-step process. The steps begin with developing a vision for protecting cultural and natural heritage values in their villages. Once they developed a vision the next step involved lessons on how to conduct cultural inventories in their villages. This consists of mapping cultural sites, documenting custom stories in local language, and creating management plans for protecting important cultural and natural heritage sites.



The participants reviewed the current legislation on protecting heritage places and various case studies from the VCC fieldworkers in attendance were presented.

The remaining steps to the process are intended to give participants an overview of the positive and negative socio-economic attributes of cultural tourism, how to

properly market cultural heritage tourism in Vanuatu, and how to create sustainability and transparency within community tourism projects.

Douglas Kalotiti, chairman of the VCC fieldworkers and workshop facilitator, stressed the importance of having VCC Field Workers working closely with cultural tourism

projects saying: "The fieldworkers have the knowledge on how to protect heritage sites and how to minimize impact on these sites as a result of tourism.

"They can also serve as ambassadors to make sure that cultural heritage tourism is used as a tool to strengthen culture and custom rather than degrade it."

Throughout the workshop participants shared their views on issues that are effecting Vanuatu's rich cultural heritage and strategies that they have used to teach, especially youth, about their history, language, and custom.

Overall, as Douglas Kalotiti stated, "the workshop achieved its main goal which was to provide a time for cultural exchange and for participants to share their pride in Vanuatu's rich cultural and natural heritage."

Peace Corps Vanuatu and the Vanuatu Cultural Center would like to thank Uje village for hosting the workshop and sharing their culture with all of the participants.