EMPATHY AND EXPERIMENTATION

Building confidence in Archives through community engagement and collaboration

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF FIJI
Connecting past, present and future
THE PROBLEM IS ARCHIVES WERE NEGATIVELY PERCEIVED, WHY?
SO EMPATHY IS HOW WE IDENTIFY BARRIERS
BARRIERS

Pacific Archives have low visibility and trust from society.

1. Misconception
2. Geographic location
3. Language
4. Lack of Trust
MISCONCEPTION

1. Confidential, Classified
2. Archives is out of bound
3. Access is to be paid
4. Mistreated for some reasons
1. Records are mostly Written in English
2. Majority of Fiji’s population are Indigenous Fijians and Indo Fijians but 99.9% of the records is written in English
3. Bureaucratic Language
4. Written 100 years ago
5. They are not typed but written in scripts
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

1. Most Fijians Don’t Leave in the City
2. It is costly to come and Stay in Suva
3. They spend on things that seems more important
4. Tend to Visit the City for Entertainment
5. Archives is not a priority – or seen as a place to access important information.
LACK OF TRUST

People think that we don’t have any think that can help them
CHALLENGE

TO BEAT THEM ALL

NAF USE EMPATHY AND EXPERIMENTATION TO FIND SOLUTION TO THESE BARRIERS

OUTREACH
OUTREACH

• Is Not Show and Tell
• Taking Archival resources to rural people
• Holding the hand of user and taking them through the records
• Important Asset are the people
• People helps us to translate the records
• Archives is about the people and it is for them
NAF USE EMPATHY AND EXPERIMENTATION TO FIND SOLUTION TO THESE BARRIERS
EMPATHY DRIVES US TO INNOVATE

- Getting their attention by developing merchandise
- Improving how we present archival information
- This has helped us to continue to support National initiative, Thematic Initiative and Cultural Initiative
PACIFIC LABORERS 150 YEARS CELEBRATION

• Brought in Fiji in 1876 to work on plantation and Infrastructure
• So overtime they have lost their history, lost their identity, they don’t belong anywhere and they feel that they don’t trust their own oral history.
• All those years they feel that they don’t belong to anyone
• When seeing their history in Black and White they are confident about their identity.
PACIFIC LABORERS 150 YEARS CELEBRATION

- After the Outreach
- They know that their history existed
- They know that these records belong to them
- They now appreciate that we look after their records and are grateful that we brought it to them
- Now they trust us
OUTREACH – ROTUMA ISLAND

• Land records and their Deed of Cession copies were made and taken back to them.
• Land Records talks about their tribes and traditional systems.
• They have never seen these records.
• Now they know that the Archives exist.
• They know that these records belong to them.
• They appreciate that we look after their records.
• Now they trust us.
FORCED MIGRATION CONFERENCE

• Power of these approach brought additional attention for the Archives to support this event.
• More and proper displays of archival records
• More stories shared during the outreach
• The descendants of the Girmitiyas are able to embrace their stories and struggles which are properly inscribed in the Archival records
• More and more scholars and the public are continuing to contact the Archives to find out information about them.
EMPATHY + EXPERIMENTATION = SOLUTION TO BARRIERS

NAF IS REDESIGNING HOW IT IS PERCEIVED BY THE COMMUNITY
OTHER EXPERIMENTS

SOCIAL MEDIA – compares favourably with more established and developed Institutions