

## *Lhaviyani Handicraft Highlights*

### *January 2008*

Lhaviyani Atoll is well known for local handicrafts making in the Maldives. Naifaru Island is home to prize winners of handicraft exhibitions at the national level. With an attempt to revive the disappearing industry and with the aim of providing young unemployed people on the islands with an income in partnership with the private sector, UNDP launched the Lhaviyani Handicraft Pilot Project in 2006.

Today, the atoll celebrates the establishment of 2 handicraft centres, one in Naifaru and one in Kurendu with modern tools and equipment installed to improve efficiency in handicraft making. 48 candidates from the atoll have been trained in lathe/wood turning, lacquer making, pyrography and jewelry making (training products below).



The Creative Arts and Crafts Training Centre (CACTC) pioneering in local handicrafts development founded by Mr. Adam Maniku (Maizan) provided the technical assistance to the project including training and establishment of the centres. At the island level, local NGOs Ifthithaahu Isdharivarunge Jamiyyaa in Naifaru, Society for Kurendu Youth and Sports (SKYS) in Kurendu and Island Women's Development Committee (IWDC) manage the production, marketing and sales. The tourist resorts in Lhaviyani; Palm Beach Resort & Spa, Komandoo Island Resort, One & Only Kanuhura and Kuredu Island Resort have shown continuous cooperation and support to the project. Efforts are ongoing to have formal marketing linkages with the communities and resorts in Lhaviyani to promote local produce.



As we conclude the second training programme in Naifaru on 25 January 2008, the trainees share their experience and hopes for the future.....



*Azlifa (left) is one of the 8 participants who joined the training from Lhaviyani Hinnvaru. She has just completed grade 10 from the Atoll Education Centre in Hinnvaru. She used to be good at art in school however the thought of making handicrafts never crossed her mind. When asked which aspect of training she enjoyed most she confirmed it was making shell crafts mainly using coconut shells and pyrography, drawing on wood with a hotwire.*

*When asked about the future, Azlifa who is just 17 discussed her options. She hopes to pursue her A-levels in Hinnvaru or go to Male' to do a computer course. She dreams to become an events manager or a public relations person one day as she enjoyed such activities as a girl scout in school as well. Azlifa assures that she will continue to make handicrafts using the skills and tools from the training, as part time work with her fellow trainees from Hinnvaru. She thanked the Hinnvaru Women's Committee for taking the initiative to provide her and other girls, the opportunity to participate in the programme. Azlifa concludes 'at first it may seem difficult and complicated to design and make crafts with fine cuts, turns and polishing, but it is only a matter of trying and practice really. One can make a good living from this if there is commitment'*

*Fayyaz (right), 38 is from Naifaru and works in the administrative department of the Felivaru fish canning actory nearby. He took annual leave to participate in the training and showed a lot of passion in art and handicrafts during the programme.*

*According to Fayyaz the training went well and he was most interested in pyrography. 'I like art a lot, I like to do portraits as well' exclaimed Fayyaz while showing his own-made items from the training. The instructor also noted that when they ran out of pyro-wood during the training Fayyaz brought wood from home and drew on normal plywood. 'He even photocopied the pyrography design book we used for the training' explained one of the instructors.*



*When asked about the marketing challenges and competition with imported crafts Fayyaz discussed the possibilities of showcasing his products at the local market and the cultural centre that is being developed in Naifaru so that tourists can access these local products during their excursion trips. Fayyaz is extremely keen to get involve in handicrafts and hopes to leave his current job to develop his own business in local crafts one day. Fayyaz concludes 'Some are born with talent while others acquire it through interest and practice. It was easy for me luckily to come up with designs and drawings'*