

# Pacific Pride

Issue 15

The Newsletter of the PRIDE Project

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## From the PRIDE Director:

### Sharing best practice: Celebrating notable achievements



Palau's Minister of Education, Hon Masa-Aki Emesiochl (far left), Emery Wenty (Director of Education) and Andrew Tabuleal (Principal) congratulate Palau's 2009 Teacher of the Year, Ms Epsie S West of Koror Elementary School.

where a special ceremony is held to honour ten **Teachers of the Year** from the four states of FSM—Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap—the Marshall Islands, Palau, Guam, Hawaii, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). It is worth noting that the first six entities are members of the Pacific Islands Forum and are participants in the PRIDE Project.

Not only are the Teachers of the Year honoured at PEC; they are also feted in their own countries through cash and other awards. The teachers from Hawaii and CNMI also get to visit Washington DC and meet the President of the United States.

The connections between indigenous/local everyday cultural activities and school mathematics were ably demonstrated at a presentation by three colleagues from Alaska—Dr Jerry Lipka, Evelyn Yanez and Dora Andrew-Ihrke. They showed us how to make geometrical shapes on traditional cloth using traditional story and expert-apprentice modelling.

Here the workshop participants used our body parts to measure the 'cloth' (represented by paper) and became quite precise and accurate in designing a head piece. We learned that storytelling is central to the Yupiaq Eskimo, whose traditional values, beliefs and lessons in becoming a Yupiaq are passed on from one generation to the next. We also learned about some studies that have shown that students undertaking the Yupiaq maths curriculum outperform those doing the regular maths curriculum. (More information can be obtained on <http://www.mathinculturalcontext.org>)

This is just one example of the many presentations that were

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The PRIDE Project (Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education) is implemented by the Institute of Education at USP and is jointly funded by the European Union and New Zealand AID through the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.



PRIDE serves Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.



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Sharing best practice in the presentations covered a broad range of topics: assessment and accountability, classroom management, diverse learners, early childhood education, education policy, education technology, health and physical education, higher education, language immersion, leadership, professional development, science education, literacy, mathematics, social studies, special education and rethinking education.

In this article, I describe the 26<sup>th</sup> Pacific Educational Conference (PEC) held in Guam from 14-17 July, one of the meetings in the northern Pacific that I was fortunate to attend and which provided much food for thought. Here I share my observations and insights.

The PEC has been an annual event, bringing together thousands of teachers, principals, educators, researchers, administrators and department/ministry of education officials from the entities and jurisdictions affiliated to the United States of America. It provides opportunities for the participants to share best classroom practices that enhance the quality of student learning.

The importance of forming strategic partnerships was also evident, as the conference was a partnership between the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), the Guam Department of Education and two tertiary providers—the University of Guam and Guam Community College.

The 26<sup>th</sup> PEC had *Preparing the Pacific Child for Life* as its theme and Valuing excellence in teaching is at the forefront of the PEC,

## The Fiji experience in Tonga



Members of the Fiji delegation with USP Vice Chancellor Professor Rajesh Chandra

The five-day programme on “Sharing Best Practice in Pacific Education” began with a 7.5 Richter scale earthquake that set everyone scrambling out of their rooms and hurrying on to the official opening. The three days of Conference were packed with informative and stimulating presentations about Pacific educational project experiences that were being supported by NZAID and the European Union through the PRIDE Project. Other parts of

the Conference programme were devoted to showcasing the most successful of 16 member countries’ sub-projects.

Fiji chose to present on the Drug Awareness from Fiji workshops for Head Teachers and Principals. Our presentation was colourful

interactive, but importantly it provided data on sub-project objectives; activities and the participants (885 teachers and 212,607 students). The Fiji booth at the showcase displayed mostly Pasifika, Rotuman and Fijian artifacts set against a backdrop of green and red and depicting national multiculturalism. The showcase provided a unique experience of Pasifika culturally sensitive approaches to the educational challenges facing the children of our

region. Educational tours to three sub-project sites in Tongatapu left participants with a much expanded vision of successful and socio-economically sustainable and culturally vibrant opportunities for quality educational development for our children at early childhood and primary school levels.

The five-member delegation from Fiji evidently made an impressive contribution to the

whole programme, summed up by Mr Wenty, Director of Education Palau, as “definitely in a league of their own”. Many thanks to the EU and NZAID and the highly capable PRIDE Project team led by Dr Priscilla Puamau for a very successful conference.

**Talica K. Malani**  
National Substance Abuse Advisory Council



Fiji's booth at the showcase Exhibition, highlighting the PRIDE-funded drugs and substance abuse awareness work

## Sharing, Showcasing and Celebrating Achievements in Pacific Education



Participants pose for a photograph outside the Fa'oneua Convention Centre in Nuku'alofa

Nuku'alofa in the Kingdom of Tonga was the venue for five key PRIDE meetings/events in March 2009. PRIDE's 18 state/national project coordinators gathered to discuss the implementation status of 109 current subprojects, and two policy bodies—the Project Steering Committee and the Forum Education Ministers—also held meetings. But perhaps the highlight was PRIDE's 10<sup>th</sup> regional conference on sharing best practice in Pacific education, followed by an exhibition and the launch of two more publications in the Pacific Education Series: *The Role of TVET in the Pacific Secondary Schools* and *Inclusive Education in the Pacific*.

PRIDE's 15 countries have much to celebrate. From the journey that had its humble beginnings in 2004, PRIDE has travelled a fair distance with many positive outcomes and impacts. This was evident in the sharing that took place over the four-day conference in Tonga. Over 60 regional participants, comprising PRIDE National/State Project Coordinators and senior education representatives closely associated with PRIDE activities, gathered to hear

at first-hand stories of achievements, challenges and lessons learned in Pacific education. Participants and observers from the University of the South Pacific, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, One Laptop Per Child Oceania, AusAID and DUCIER from the University of South Australia also attended.

Some examples will serve to illustrate the range of topics that country representatives covered in their presentations. ‘Sharing best practice in non-formal education’ was the topic for both the Cook Islands representatives, who described supporting communities in education, and the Marshall Islands representatives, who described enhancing parental skills to support children's learning.

‘Sharing best practice in planning’ was the topic for the PNG presenters, who discussed their visit to Samoa to study the sector wide approach, and the Kiribati presenters, who shared their thoughts on the processes and challenges they faced in strategic planning.

The Solomon Islands presenters shared their experiences on environmental education, while the Vanuatu presenters described a comprehensive pilot project for teacher capacity-building.

The theme ‘Education for all—mobilising communities to meet education goals’ drew presentations from four countries. Samoa's presentation was on ‘Developing a sustainable model for inclusive education’ while Fiji presented on ‘Education for the world we live in’ through their drug awareness subproject.

Strengthening collaboration and partnerships between schools, cultures and communities was the focus for Palau, and Tonga gave a presentation on an integrated approach to the topic ‘From policy development to implementation in early childhood education’.

Niue, Nauru, Tokelau and Tuvalu shared their stories on improving the quality of education in the areas of formative assessment, sustainable livelihoods, curriculum development and teacher development, and the four states of FSM described their experience of a sub-regional

collaboration on capacity-building in the education management information systems with Palau and Marshall Islands.

The passion and commitment of the presenters and the honest articulation of experiences and case studies from the 15 countries contributed to a rich and valuable conference. A key success factor was the support and significant contribution made by the in-country state/national project coordinators, who continue to be the ‘wind beneath the wings’ of not just their country Ministries or Departments of Education but also of the PRIDE team.

Co-host, Tonga's Ministry of Education, Women Affairs and Culture, organised field visits for delegates to the newly refurbished and re-sourced IE Centre and to the Taimaliemeilangi and Vai ko Latai kindergarten centres, where the delegates enjoyed delightful entertainment performed by children, parents and teachers. Delegates were also treated to a social evening hosted by PRIDE at the beautiful Vakaloa Resort, where they showcased their dancing skills and enjoyed a sumptuous Tongan feast. ■

**Sereana Tagivakatini**  
PRIDE Project

## Forum Ministers endorse new strategic framework for education in the Pacific



**Forum Education Ministers in Tonga March 2009**

The Pacific Islands Forum Education Ministers Meeting (FEdMM) which took place in Nuku'alofa, in the Kingdom of Tonga in March this year was a significant meeting because it endorsed a new strategic direction for regional education, as recommended by a review of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) that took place in 2008. (Forum Education Ministers endorsed the Forum Basic Education Action Plan in 2001 and it has been implemented through the PRIDE project.)

Commenting on the Review in his opening remarks at the meeting, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Tuiloma Neroni Slade, said the review was conducted by an independent team of consultants, who visited 14 Forum Island Countries and identified many challenges the region faces in the delivery of education. "It found that, despite the substantial differences in social, historical, demographic and economic contexts, the 14 countries under review are experiencing many of the same challenges. The

review has identified many similar priorities for further development of their education sectors," said Mr Slade.

In the main, the review concluded that countries are doing fairly well in the area of access to primary schooling and it is pleasing to see that some countries are commencing fee-free primary education. However, the review also found that "many countries have access issues at the secondary level and most are not doing particularly well in the provision of early childhood education. The

majority of children with disabilities in our region receive very little if any schooling. Children in remote and isolated areas are also disadvantaged."

The Forum Education Ministers considered the recommendations of the FBEAP review and endorsed a new strategic direction for regional education in the form of a revised framework.

"This new framework, entitled the Pacific Education Development Framework, articulates these challenges and priorities and provides a platform for partners to coordinate and assist countries," stated Mr Slade.

"It also includes areas that were not so prominent in 2001 when FBEAP was first developed. This includes the development challenge that the region faces with HIV and AIDS, and Information and Communications Technology."

On the theme of the meeting, "Partnerships in Pacific Education" the Forum Secretary General commended the key role of the development partners and the donor community in assisting countries through regional and multilateral mechanisms in the education sector.

**Dr Helen Tavola**  
Social Policy Adviser, PIFS

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## PRIDE'S STATE/NATIONAL PROJECT COORDINATORS' 2009 WORKSHOP IN NUKU'ALOFA, TONGA



**Regional participants at the PRIDE NPC Workshop held from 18th – 19th March**

A two-day annual regional State/National Project Coordinators' (S/NPCs) workshop was held in Tonga from 18-19<sup>th</sup> March where all 18 S/NPCs met with the PRIDE team to discuss issues related to subproject implementation, subproject strategies

and timelines, and impact evaluation. The main objectives of the workshop were:

- (i) for S/NPCs to report on the status of implementation of all subprojects at the country level
- (ii) to remind S/NPCs about their responsibility to provide timely PRIDE M&E

reporting requirements, including acquittal documentation (iii) to inform the project coordinators about the Subproject Impact Study and solicit their support in the collection of data at the country level.

Unlike previous workshops, where the focus was on capacity-building, this workshop allowed project coordinators to prepare and present a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation on the status of individual subproject implementation, using a standard reporting template. Following the presentations, general discussions were held on emerging issues and challenges encountered in the administration and implementation of the subprojects.

Next, one-on-one country consultations between the project coordinators and country advisers were conducted in order to map out strategies to resolve issues hampering subproject implementation and timely

provision of M&E reports. Workshop time was also provided for coordinators to complete any outstanding M&E reports. Finally, project coordinators were briefed on the PRIDE Subproject Impact Study when the findings from the pilot study in Fiji were highlighted and plans to conduct the study in selected countries explained.

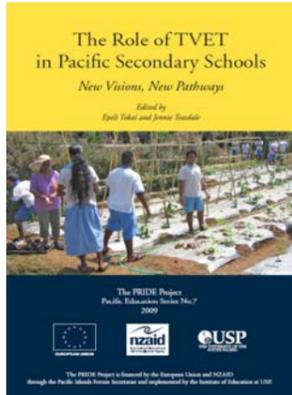
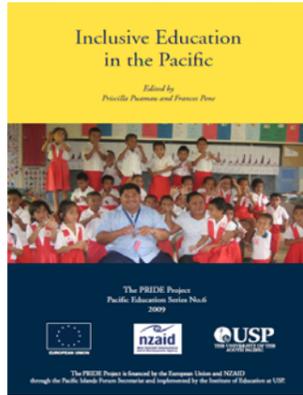
The outcomes of the workshop included:

- (i) a development of a more up-to-date profile of the subproject implementation at the country level,
- (ii) building of understanding on the main tasks to accomplish for the timely completion of subproject implementation and
- (iii) deadlines for the completion of M&E reports and acquittals documents.

**Pala Wari,**  
PRIDE Project

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## NEW TITLES IN PACIFIC EDUCATION SERIES LAUNCHED



The two new titles in the Pacific Education Series launched on 24th March, 2009, in Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

On 24th March at the Dateline Hotel, Tonga two new volumes of the Pacific Education Series were launched by H.E. Ms Christine Bogle, Resident NZ High Commissioner to Tonga: *Inclusive Education in the Pacific*, Pacific Education Series No. 6, edited by Priscilla Puamau and Frances Pene, and *The Role of TVET in Pacific Secondary Schools: New Visions, New Pathways*, Pacific Education Series No. 7, edited by Epeli Tokai and Jennie Teasdale.

*Inclusive Education in the Pacific* is an outcome of PRIDE's eighth re-

gional workshop held in Nadi, Fiji from 1 – 5 October, 2007. PRIDE worked in close partnership with five other development partners and the Fiji Ministry of Education in the planning, implementation and funding of this workshop on inclusive education.

The workshop was attended by a total of 44 people: regional participants from 13 Forum countries and Tokelau, resource persons, representatives from the seven partners and three observers.

The book contains 14 chapters, written by the workshop resource

people, participants and presenters, and range from the philosophical underpinnings of inclusive education to practical guidelines for inclusive practices in schools, with a special focus on the education of children with disabilities.

This book is intended primarily for providers, practitioners, academics, professionals, teacher educators, policy-makers, disabled people's associations, NGOs and researchers engaged in the areas of inclusive education and the education of children with disabilities.

*The Role of TVET in Pacific Secondary Schools: New Visions, New Pathways*, is the outcome of a workshop held in Palau 2006 attended by educators from 15 Pacific Island countries. The focus of the workshop was the role of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the secondary school curriculum.

The workshop was run by the PRIDE Project in collaboration with the UNESCO International Centre for TVET (UNEVOC), the Pacific Association of TVET and Pacific Resources for Education and Learning. UNEVOC Director Dr Rupert Maclean gave three keynote addresses that opened up new options for school-based TVET in the Pa-

cific. His presentations are included in this book, providing an overview of international developments.

The workshop included on-site case studies of TVET programmes in schools in Palau, as well as case studies of programmes in Fiji and Papua New Guinea. These are fully described in the book. The core of the book consists of the outcomes of the many group discussions. In a very real sense this is a book written by Pacific people for Pacific people. Issues discussed include building traditional knowledge into TVET curricula, TVET in primary schools, training TVET teachers, and TVET for students with special needs.

The book is intended primarily for planners, policy-makers, school principals and teachers involved in the delivery of secondary education throughout the Pacific. Its vision is a new style of Pacific secondary schooling with a holistic curriculum, incorporating both the vocational and the academic, and deeply grounded in local values and wisdom.

**Libby Cass**  
PRIDE Information Specialist

## Sharing best practice: Celebrating notable achievements

(Continued from page 1)

shown to the PEC participants. There is much to be learned between and across countries and cultures. There is a divide between the North and South Pacific, i.e. between countries that are still historically and politically affiliated to the United States and those bound in some way to England, New Zealand and Australia. In order to bridge the gap and eventually close it, much effort is required. The PRIDE Project, in close collaboration and partnership with PREL, is making some progress in this area.

Ministries of Education in the South Pacific may like to consider

organising a national conference for teachers and principals in the way that Palau has done, recently convening its 15<sup>th</sup> annual education convention. At the regional level, the Institute of Education (IOE) at the University of the South Pacific may be the best institution to take on the role that PREL currently plays in the North Pacific. The IOE is certainly strategically well placed to begin the tradition of organising the first educational conference in the South Pacific for practising teachers, principals and other appropriate stakeholders.

The Pacific Association of Teacher Educators (PATE) needs to be revitalised to continue its

important role of providing opportunities for sharing best practice amongst the body of teacher educators at the regional level. Again, the IOE at USP is best placed to take a key role in developing professional networks and sharing for teachers of teachers.

Ministries of Education may also like to consider instituting the Teacher of the Year award in their individual countries, encouraging every school to begin this worthwhile project. What is important is that a start is made in recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching. This will place the emphasis where it counts most—on what is actually

happening in Pacific classrooms.

South Pacific countries are also encouraged to send teachers and principals to the next PEC which will take place in Pohnpei/FSM in 2011. (The PREL Board of Directors made the decision that the PEC will now be held bi-annually, rather than annually as hitherto, due to the current economic crisis.) Not only will they learn about best practice in different contexts, they can also share what is happening in their own classrooms as well as develop rich professional networks.

**Priscilla Puamau, PhD**  
Project Director

## Pacific education news in brief

Mr Manoj Kumar resigned from the University with effect from July 18<sup>th</sup>. He joined PRIDE as Assistant accountant on 15<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2007 after serving in USP's Finance Department for 8 years. Manoj has migrated with his family to the United States.

PRIDE welcomes one of its own team members, Mr Leonaitasi (Tasi) Taukafa in his new role as PRIDE Project Manager. Tasi replaces John Stunnenberg after acting in the position since the beginning of this year.

The Head of EC Social Sector, Ms Gabriela Koehler-Raue,

was farewelled at a lunch hosted by USP-PRIDE on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July. Among other duties, Gabriela served as EU's representative on PRIDE affairs for the past four years.

The Pacific Education community lost a leader and friend through the loss of Dr Tom Barlow, President and CEO for PREL. PRIDE gratefully acknowledges his keen efforts to improve collaboration between the northern and southern Pacific. In particular, Tom was instrumental in developing true partnerships between PREL and PRIDE, which have since collaborated on a number of initiatives including

the utilisation of PREL consultants in regional and sub-regional workshops and national subprojects in FSM, RMI and Palau. The then PRIDE Director, Dr Bob Teasdale, was also invited to attend the PREL Board of Directors' meeting and the Pacific Educational Conference in 2005/2006 and this was reciprocated by a high-powered delegation from PREL making a presentation and attending both the Forum Education Ministers of Education Meeting and the PRIDE Project Steering Committee in late 2006. PRIDE was also represented by current director, Dr Priscilla Puamau, at the Pacific Educational Conference

held in American Samoa in July 2008. PREL and PRIDE continue to network on issues of common concern to their organisations.

The 21<sup>st</sup> PRIDE PMC meeting was held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June at the PRIDE Conference Room in USP.

Cook Islands has a new Secretary for Education, Ms Sharyn Paio. Ms Paio replaces Mr John Hermann. Tuvalu also has a new Permanent Secretary for Education, Mrs Olialuga Iosua, who replaced Mr Minute Alapati Taupo.

<http://www.usp.ac.fj/pride>