

Pacific Pride

Issue 2

The Newsletter of the PRIDE Project

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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.

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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From the Director

During the past few months, members of the PRIDE team have revisited the Delors Report, **Learning: the treasure within**. Many educators regard it as the most visionary document published by UNESCO for many years. It is the end result of a wide ranging review carried out by the fifteen members of the UNESCO International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, chaired by Jacques Delors, a former President of the European Commission.

Although published in 1996, the Report continues to be a highly useful blueprint for the reform of education, regardless of the economic, demographic and social indicators of each particular country. It has been widely debated by educators and politicians, and its ideas used as a springboard for education reform in a wide variety of settings. In our view, it offers the most coherent and inspiring foundation for education of any international report in recent years.

The priorities of the Ministers of

Education in our region, as reflected in the Forum Basic Education Action Plan, and in our own PRIDE Project Financing Agreement, harmonise very closely with current international thinking about education, and especially with the themes and vi-



Blending the local and the global: the example of a Nauruan "fusion" fan.

sions of the Delors Report. We encourage all of our colleagues in the region to reread the Report, and especially the preface, *Education: the necessary Utopia*, written by Jacques Delors himself.

In his preface, Jacques Delors identifies and discusses seven tensions that he believes characterise

most education policy, planning and learning environments in a rapidly changing world. The tensions that have particular resonance with Pacific communities include those between:

- The local and the global
- The universal and the individual
- Tradition and modernity
- Cooperation and competition
- The spiritual and the temporal

Interestingly, Delors does not elaborate on the idea of tension itself. He is certainly not talking about tension as conflict, the kind of tension that leads to fighting and war. Rather, he is talking about a functional or positive tension.

This idea of functional tension is best understood by thinking about the strings of musical instruments. Many of you play a guitar, and will appreciate that the strings need to be kept in a constant state of tightness if you are to make pleasing music. One of your jobs is to maintain a functional tension by regularly readjusting the strings to

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Resource Centre takes shape

One of the key responsibilities of the PRIDE Project is to establish an online Resource Centre to encourage the sharing of best practice and experience amongst our fifteen member countries.



Two of PRIDE's multi-skilled staff, Mr. Epeli Tokai (with hammer) and Mr. Tasi Taukafa, setting up the shelves.

The task of establishing a centre such as this is surprisingly complex, and has required close liaison with

senior staff of the USP Library. Our Information Specialist, Libby Cass, has been particularly busy with planning for the digitisation of material, and preparing to catalogue it in the USP Library system. PRIDE is fortunate to have someone with Libby's knowledge and experience to assist with this.

Because of copyright restrictions not all resources can be digitised. Nor do some countries have adequate ICT facilities to access digital material via the Internet. We therefore need a back-up collection of hard-copy materials and a physical location in which to store them. A small library in the PRIDE building on the USP Laucala campus was developed to house the material. Just before Christmas the PRIDE team had a pleasant surprise when a truckload of shelving and other



Our Cook Islands NPC, Ms. Repeta Puna, explores the Library during a visit

library equipment arrived. It was quickly offloaded into the library. Members of the PRIDE team then showed just how multi-skilled they are! Within a few hours they had fully assembled all of the bits and pieces to create a pleasant and functional library. ■

The Cook Islands begins development of its 15 - year strategic plan for education with support of the PRIDE Project

The Cook Islands Ministry of Education has begun the development of its 15 year strategic plan for the education sector. The Ministry is taking a lead role in the planning process, the work being coordinated by its Director of Policy and Planning, Ms. Repeta Puna, who is also our PRIDE National Project Co-ordinator (NPC). The work being carried out includes the development of: a Policy Options Paper; a Policy Framework; a fully costed 15 year strategic plan; and a 5-year strategic plan, this being the first of three in a series of plans to cover the 15 year period.

The PRIDE Project was invited by the Ministry to support the planning process and to provide technical assistance in the identification, use and application of data in the development of the Policy Options Paper. This is in line with PRIDE's core functions of helping each country develop comprehensive strategic plans for the education sector, covering both formal and non-formal education, and of ensuring that plans are fully and realistically budgeted.

Mr. Epeli Tokai, one of the PRIDE

project Education Advisers, was assigned to work with Ms. Repeta Puna, and with Dr. Airini, who was recruited by NZAID from the University of Auckland to co-manage the project with Ms. Puna. Epeli's initial input was for two weeks in the latter half of November 2004. The first part of his work was to:

- analyse previous review documents including the Inception Report put together by two consultants, Vince Catherwood and Victor Levine;
- identify issues highlighted in the reports and formulate options for consultation with stake-holders;
- identify research data necessary for the formulation of each option for the compulsory sector;
- organise data to help develop policy options for the compulsory sector;
- analyse and cost each option for the compulsory and other sectors; and
- share knowledge on the identification of data and analysis of options with his Ministry of Education counterpart.

The Cook Islands is utilising per-



L - R: Dr. Airini, Mr. Tokai (middle), and Ms. Repeta Puna.

sonnel in its Ministry of Education to take a lead role in the development of its planning documents. It gives the Ministry the freedom to put together a plan that is unique to the Cook Islands.

Another key aspect is the involvement of stakeholders in both Rarotonga and the outer islands in the development of the plan. This is because the plan's success is dependent upon the actions of key stake-

holders. They are more likely to support and contribute to its implementation if they are involved with the planning, and if they believe it will have a positive impact on education in the Cook Islands.

In addition, their involvement gives them a sense of ownership of the plan since through their participation it will become their plan, not just a document put together and owned by external consultants. ■

Priscilla Puamau: The most recent member of the PRIDE team

Members of the PRIDE team were delighted to welcome Priscilla Puamau, who joined us on 31 August 2004, just in time to travel to Lautoka, Fiji, for our first regional workshop.

Dr. Puamau came to the PRIDE Project from the Fiji College of Advanced Education (FCAE), where she had served as principal for 2½ years, and before that as vice-principal, again for 2½ years.

Having trained at USP as an English and Geography teacher, Priscilla spent the first ten years of her working life as a secondary school teacher in urban Suva. In 1989 she started a Master of Arts degree in Education at USP, winning a scholarship for a year of full-time study in 1991 that enabled her to research and write a thesis analysing government policy on the education of Indigenous Fijians.

With her MA awarded, Priscilla was appointed in 1992 as Head of the School of Education at the newly established FCAE. Her next move was to Brisbane, in 1995, having won a scholarship for PhD studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Queensland, where she spent

four exciting years pursuing her interests in Fijian education. Her research focused on why Indigenous Fijians consistently underachieve in formal schooling, her thesis being firmly grounded in postcolonial theory.

Priscilla was born in Labasa, Vanua Levu, her mother's home town. Her father came from the island of Vanuabalavu, in the Lau Islands. The family moved to Suva where Priscilla completed both her primary and secondary schooling.

On the home front, Priscilla is deeply proud of her four children: Seini, Lai, Eileen, and Manoa (the youngest). Seini, the eldest, has just completed a USP law degree in Vanuatu with flying colours, and Lai, her younger brother, has just finished Form 7 and hopes to follow in his sister's footsteps. The two youngest children are still at high school.

When asked how she was enjoying the change from heading a large teachers' college to being an adviser with the PRIDE Project, Priscilla responded:

"I absolutely love working for PRIDE. I particularly like the collegial



and professional relationships within the team. Coupled with a good team spirit, this bodes well for the Project. And the peaceful work environment is conducive to increased productivity.

"The other appealing feature of my new job are the visits to countries of the region. This adds a new and exciting dimension to my professional life.

"It is my conviction that the PRIDE Project will make a significant difference in the education systems

of the Pacific region. The road ahead is challenging for national Ministries of Education, and for principals, teachers and other stakeholders who are committed to achieving quality education.

"With educational initiatives that are owned and implemented by the fifteen participating countries, however, I have high hopes that the PRIDE Project will have an impact where it counts most: in the classrooms of the region where teaching and learning occur". ■

“Footpaths to the Future” - new direction for education in Nauru

The Republic of Nauru has had increasingly difficult economic challenges in recent years. Children in particular have suffered, with declining rates of school attendance and limited resources for those who do participate.

In October 2004, however, the people of Nauru once again went to the polls. On this occasion there was a landslide victory to the new progressive group. This has given the government a strong mandate to implement its reforms.

By early November a national budget had been tabled and formally ratified, the first for many years. It is a clear, realistic document that seeks to set Nauru on a process of economic recovery. Inevitably this will be a slow and difficult process, but there is a clear sense in Nauru that the worst is behind, and that there is now hope for the future.

The Minister for Education, the Honourable Baron Waqa, has retained his portfolio and remains strongly committed to education reform. AusAID is funding a full-time position, that of Director of Education. The appointee, Mr. Michael



Teachers at one of the planning workshops in Nauru. The workshops were held at the USP Centre. Standing at rear is Ms Tryphosa Keke, who facilitated group discussions and ensured effective documentation of recommendations.

Longhurst, from Queensland, already is having a significant impact after only two months on the job.

The Minister for Education, the Honourable Baron Waqa, has retained his portfolio and remains strongly committed to education reform.

The PRIDE Project has been working closely with its National Project Coordinator in Nauru, Mr. Jarden Kephas, who is the Secretary

for Education. At the invitation of Jarden and the Minister, the Project Director, Bob Teasdale, visited Nauru from 12 to 20 November for a series of planning workshops, and to talk about development of a national strategic plan.

A series of four workshops was held, each on the theme of *Footpaths to the future of education in Nauru*. One workshop was for parents, another for representatives of civil society organisations, including the teachers' union, while two were for

teachers. At each workshop participants met in small workgroups to draw up their priorities for the reform of education in Nauru.

All workshops were productive and notable for the depth and relevance of the discussions and recommendations. The workshops also were notable for the numbers of teachers who attended: approximately 90% of secondary teachers in Nauru, and over 60% of primary teachers, came in their own time, staying until late in the afternoon. Their obvious interest and concern gave a clear signal of their commitment to supporting the Ministry in its efforts to improve learning opportunities for the nation's children.

The outcomes of the workshop have been fully documented by Ms. Tryphosa Keke, one of the senior staff member of the Ministry, and they are now being used to develop a draft strategic plan that will be considered by cabinet early in 2005. A small group from Nauru will then spend a few days with the PRIDE team in Suva during February to finalise the plan and prepare sub-project proposals. ■

The PRIDE Project supports planning workshop for Tokelau

During the 3 weeks starting from 22 November 2004, Tokelau teachers met at Tokelau House in Apia, Samoa, to develop the National Policy Framework for Education in Tokelau. The workshop was organised by the Department of Education, Tokelau, under the able leadership of our National PRIDE Project Coordinator (NPC) for Tokelau, Ms. Lili Tuioti, and the Acting Director for Education, Ms. Tessa Kirifi. In addition to the qualified teachers, participants included three principals, three volunteers from New Zealand's Voluntary Services Abroad, and some unqualified teacher aides.

The workshop was co-funded by the Department of Education of Tokelau and by the PRIDE Project. Ms. Elaine Lameta, a language consultant, provided technical assistance for the first two weeks of the workshop and Dr. Priscilla Puamau, one of PRIDE Education Advisers, attended the latter two weeks as a critical friend and provided a big picture perspective.

In the development of its five-year



Getting it ready for the flipchart, Ms. Tuioti (centre) and Dr. Puamau (far right) working with teachers during a group session.

strategic plan and in preparation for the workshop, extensive consultations were held on all three atolls during September. These consultative meetings covered the following areas:

- Assessment of strengths in the Tokelau education system and their incorporation in Tokelau's future development;
- Weaknesses in the system and

how to overcome them;

- Goals of Education – What type of society Tokelau wishes in the next 10 years, what must be done now to encourage and promote movements towards achieving this type of society;
- The attitudes and values the system should promote;
- Identifying the objectives of the Tokelau education curriculum and what learning areas are

essential in the curriculum and prioritising them;

- Identifying and prioritising the essential skills for all Tokelau students;
- Identifying pathways for students upon completion of the curriculum and training for adults; and
- Identifying methods to promote languages in Tokelau's education curriculum.

Written feedback from these consultations was used to develop the national policy framework and key learning areas. Important outcomes of this first curriculum planning workshop include the following:

- The development of a draft version of Tokelau National Policy Framework for Education; and
- The Development of the Tokelau Language Strand – major areas/skills, achievement objectives and learning outcomes from Years 1– 11.

Further consultations are planned to take place before these documents are ratified. ■

Concept paper on “ Culture, Literacy and Livelihoods” in the Pacific

The PRIDE Project was invited by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in Vancouver, Canada, to present a paper on Literacy and Livelihoods at an “Experts Meeting” held during November 15-17. Mahendra Singh, the Project Manager, presented the paper on behalf of the PRIDE team. The meeting was organized to seek advice and recommendations on initiatives that could be undertaken by COL as it prepares its 3 years plan (2006-2009). More information on this meeting can be obtained by following the link: www.col.org/programmes/conferences/literacyandlivelihoods.htm.

The paper presented at the COL meeting, “Culture, Literacy and Livelihoods: Reconceptualising the Reform of Education in Oceania” is available on our website: www.usp.ac.fj/pride.

The paper addresses the conceptual foundation on which PRIDE is built, specifically in the area of strategic planning and

implementation of education in Oceania.



Literacy & Livelihood, Mahendra Singh presenting PRIDE's paper at COL meeting.

In addition, the paper highlights principles that can be applied to guide curriculum reform. Particular attention is focused on programs in the field of Literacy and Livelihoods (L&L) in the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) sector, and on the delivery

of such programs using ICT and/or Distance and Flexible Learning modes. It also considers the place of TVET and L&L programs in the secondary school curriculum.

The following are key areas where the participants at the COL workshop perceived that COL could utilize its strength to “add value” to current literacy and livelihoods initiatives within the Commonwealth:

- Policy Development – there are weaknesses in the development and implementation of policies that encourage and enable the integration of literacy and livelihoods. One explanation for a lack of integration is that literacy development is the responsibility of the Ministries of Education whilst livelihoods, as *economic development*, are the responsibility of other agencies. COL has demonstrated expertise in making the necessary links amongst the various stakeholders to foster awareness of the need to develop

and implement policies to integrate literacy and livelihoods;

- Research & Evaluation – COL was encouraged to develop case studies, best practice examples, and empirical analysis;
- Information Technology management and applications – COL has shown its IT strength with the development of its *knowledge finder*, a technological tool for “mining” and refining the resource base of open and distance learning information repositories available through the Internet; and
- Training – COL could utilize its strength to support countries as they enhance their capacities to develop and implement policies integrating literacy and livelihoods.

Upon his return to Fiji, Mahendra conducted a lively and informative workshop to share the outcomes of the COL meeting with his colleagues from the PRIDE Project, the USP Institute of Education, and the Ministry of Education in Fiji. ■

From the Director

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ensure harmony. Likewise educators have the constant challenge of achieving a functional or creative balance between the tensions confronting them as they plan and deliver education.

The concepts of tension and balance are relevant in educational policy and planning, and in curriculum development. Almost every educator we speak with in the Pacific believes that the balance is wrong, that the global, the competitive and the temporal have far too strong an influence in most learning environments. How do we restore the balance?

Many of our young people in the Pacific are achieving this balance in the realm of visual arts, music, drama and dance. Perhaps we should turn to them for an example.

There are currently some remarkably creative initiatives in the Pacific. Individuals and groups within local communities are creating new forms of expression from the fusion of the traditional and the modern. The Oceania Centre for Arts and

Culture at the USP Laucala Campus is playing a significant role here.

By way of example, much contemporary music in the Pacific represents a dynamic syncretism of the local and the global. Many of our young people refer to this as “fusion music”. It has equal resonance with those who celebrate and enjoy the traditional as it has for those who prefer modern western music styles.

Another wonderful example of the fusion of the global and the local is a fan given to me in Nauru a couple of months ago (see illustration).



It is very finely woven, using traditional techniques of fan making, and looks exactly like the fans of yesteryear. Except for one thing. It is not made with the fibres of young coconut leaves, but is woven entirely with vividly coloured, fine plastic string,

along with plastic decorations around the edge. When it was presented to me by Mr. Jarden Kephas, the Secretary for Education, he said to me, “Bob, this was the best example we could find in Nauru of the fusion of the local with the global. We think it is a good example of what you have been talking about. We hope we can fuse the local and the global in the same way in our school curriculum.”

In the realm of education, whether in policy, planning, curriculum, or in the classroom itself, we should strive for this dynamic fusion between tradition and modernity, the spiritual and the temporal, and the global and the local. Young people need to grow up with the skills and confidence to live successfully in a globalising world. Yet they also need to grow up with a clear sense of their own local cultural identity, built on a strong foundation of their own cultures, languages and spiritualities, and with a deep pride in their very own values, traditions and wisdoms. ■

Dr. Bob Teasdale,
Director of PRIDE

A busy few months ahead

The PRIDE team is having a busy start to the new year, with preparations for 3 workshops in February and March:

Regional Workshop on Educational Statistics, 31 Jan. to 11 Feb., at the UNESCO Pacific Regional Office in Apia. PRIDE is collaborating with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Montreal, Canada. Epeli Tokai, is working with UNESCO Statistical Consultant, Brian Doyle, to ensure effective capacity building for data managers from all 15 countries.

The Second PRIDE Regional Workshop: Language Policies in Education. Under the leadership of Dr 'Ana Taufe'ulungaki, Director of the USP Institute of Education, this workshop will explore the complex issues of national language policies in the education sector. Participants from all 15 countries will meet at the new Pacific Theological College Conference Centre in Suva, 2 - 9 Feb.

National Workshop, Vanuatu, on Principles of In-service Training, Port Vila, 7 - 11 Mar. At the invitation of the Ministry of Education, Priscilla Puamau and Bob Teasdale will assist with this workshop which will focus on how to prepare teachers to implement the new education reforms addressing the extension of universal basic education from six to eight years.

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www.usp.ac.fj/pride