FORUM SECRETARIAT

FORUM EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING

Auckland, New Zealand

SESSION TWO PAPER

IMPROVING QUALITY IN BASIC EDUCATION

The attached paper, prepared by the University of the South Pacific in collaboration with the Forum Secretariat, discusses teacher training and related basic education quality issues and makes a number of recommendations for addressing these, for the consideration of Ministers.

IMPROVING QUALITY IN BASIC EDUCATION

Executive Summary

The paper focuses on the quality of teachers as a major factor affecting the learning achievement of pupils in schools. It explores whether there are any weaknesses in terms of either a lack of trained teachers in basic education, access to training institutions and sufficient resources available to teachers to make full use of the available skills, and some of the issues and constraints and ways to address these constraints. With reference to the present situation regarding the training and availability of properly trained teachers for Early Childhood Education (ECE) and primary schools in the FICs, the paper highlights needs and offers suggestions for enhancing the quality of teacher education and the educational environment prevailing in schools generally.

2. The FICs are witnessing a rapid growth in ECE with the NGOs, Churches and the communities playing key roles. There has been significant regional and bilateral assistance in the ECE area, mainly in training. While there is strong endorsement by the respective FIC governments of the importance of ECE in children's development and future learning, state direction and contribution so far has been limited, being restricted mainly to some assistance with teacher training and classroom resources.

3. Alongside the issues of access and equity, increasing efforts are also being made by FICs to address the issue of quality in primary education. In this regard, matters pertaining to pre and in-service training of teachers, curriculum, resources for teaching and learning, and monitoring of children's learning become important considerations. These are addressed in various sections of this paper.

Recommendations

4. The following recommendations are made for the consideration of Ministers:

   a. Early Childhood Education

   That while continuing with collaborative efforts with NGOs, church and community organisations in providing ECE to pre-school age children, governments should address resource requirements for ECE teacher training and assess how ECE teachers can obtain the same status and conditions of employment as for their primary counterparts.

   b. Pre-Service Teacher Education

   That upgrading of pre-service training programmes, staffing and resources at the training institutions that is either in process or is being anticipated in most training institutions, be fully addressed as a matter of priority.

   That induction for beginning teachers is formalised involving teacher training institutions, CDUs, field staff and schools.

That small island states that do not have their own training institutions consider establishing teachers' centres to be used for complementary training of local trainees who are undertaking USP extension courses in Education as a route to a teacher qualification. A substantive position of a co-ordinator of the teachers' centre be established and filled by a qualified teacher educator who would also supervise school-based training of trainees.

c.   In-Service Teacher Education

That existing data bases be further utilised to generate teacher supply projections where necessary and plans be implemented to train all untrained teachers as soon as practicable.

That upgrading programmes be considered for serving teachers who are found to be partially trained as assessed against the level of pre-service training currently being offered in most FIC primary training institutions.

That intensive in-service courses targeting specific needs of teachers such as proficiency in English and skills in multi-class teaching be mounted in countries where teachers need such courses.

d.   Classroom Teaching

In accordance with the local data base on the conditions that exist in schools in terms of the quality of classrooms and physical facilities, attention be paid to upgrading those classrooms which are currently impoverished and provide a sub-standard educational environment for teaching and learning.

e.   Community Support

That the current initiatives in promoting the active involvement of the school community in the affairs of the school be strengthened in order to enhance the quality of facilities and teaching-learning resources.

f.   Towards Enhancing Professionalism in Teaching

That enhancing professionalism in teaching, whereby the profession is guided by the ethos, standards and ethics of the profession itself, be promoted as a long-term goal for enhancing teachers' capacity for managing changes and their identity as teachers.

———————————————————————

IMPROVING QUALITY IN BASIC EDUCATION

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on improving quality[1] in basic education through enhancing the quality of teacher education[2] and the educational environment in which teachers operate as professionals. Teacher education is used here in broad terms covering both the initial training of future teachers and provisions for their continued professional development as teachers.

2.   The paper is based on the contention that quality teacher training and continued upgrading of teachers' skills and support services are essential pre-requisites for improving achievement in learning at the classroom level. With reference to literature in teacher education, a recent report on teacher education in Australia (Ramsey, 2000), for example, states in strong terms:

> There is one issue that now seems to have been put to rest, that is, the teacher really does make the difference in student learning (p. 13).

> The society we have is largely created in our schools. It is primarily from the teachers that a love of learning is acquired. The intellectual energy underpinning our society begins in classrooms where teachers develop the talents and capacities of their students. In partnerships with parents, teachers have an important role in shaping the values and attitudes of young people (p. 214).

3.   Literature on education points to the complexity of teachers' role and highlights the pressures on teachers today due to changes that are taking place in the wider social, cultural and economic spheres (Delors, et al. 1996). While classroom teaching remains the central part of the teachers' role, their role as change agents, in the wider sense, is getting more complex and challenging. Delores et al. (1996) point out:

> The need for change, from narrow nationalism to universalism, from ethnic and cultural prejudices to tolerance, understanding and pluralism, from autocracy to democracy in its various manifestations, and from a technologically divided world where the high technology is the privilege of the few to a technologically united world, places enormous responsibilities on teachers who participate in the moulding of the characters and minds of the new generations. The stakes are high, and the moral values formed in childhood and throughout life become of particular importance (p.141)

4.   The first part of this paper outlines the status of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and analyses some of the issues and constraints in enhancing quality in this area. The second part discusses issues seen pertinent in primary teacher education, teaching and professional development of teachers. For illustrative purposes, reference is made specifically to the ECE and

---

[1] The term quality is seen as 'elusive' and 'multi-dimensional' (Afamasaga, 2000). In this paper "quality" is seen in operational terms, i.e, in terms of achieving stipulated outcomes. For example, quality in terms of recruitment of teacher trainees is seen as meeting the set criteria, quality in teachers' college curriculum as satisfying stated educational principles etc. Thus the term derives its attributes from the stated assumptions, criteria or principles that refer to the aspect under consideration.

[2] While this paper focuses on teacher education and teaching, there are other important aspects of basic education which are also used as 'indicators' of quality. These include: the quality and relevance of curriculum, examination results, retention rates, resources, etc. However, due to the inter-related nature of these indicators, a focus on teacher education and teaching allowed some comments to be made on the above mentioned indicators as well, albeit in passing

primary education in Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru and Samoa and to the Basic Education and Literacy Support (BELS) programme. The paper also highlights the findings of the BELS Programme on qualitative aspects of primary teaching in its member countries in the USP region.   The paper concludes with a number of recommendations based on the discussion of issues and constraints in enhancing quality in basic education.

2. Early Childhood Education

2.1. An Overview of ECE

5.   All FICs acknowledge the importance of ECE as the first vital level of education in their plans for promoting Education for All (EFA), especially through the formal school system. Its development, however, varies greatly across the countries in terms of national policy, teacher education and the continuing education and upgrading of teachers.   With minor updating, a summary of factors in ECE (Tavola, 2000) is reproduced below to indicate the present status of ECE in selected FICs.

	Status of Government policy on ECE and level of state involvement	Notes
Cook Islands	Draft adopted in 1998. ECE run and funded.	ECE centres attached to primary schools. Teachers mostly primary teachers nearing retirement, not specialists. Coordinator in MOE
Fiji	Brief policy exists. Pays teachers salaries in recognized rural schools. Offers training and advisory visits. Resource kits to rural schools (NZODA). Teacher training course at LTC.	A growing demand for ECE has resulted in a growing number of ECE centres (494 in 2000). ECE mostly run by NGOs, community and churches.
FSM	No policy in place. Head Start programs in most islands. State subsidies to NGOs.	Efforts are being made to reach all Islands. NGOs and churches are also involved.
Kiribati	Policy development in process. Very basic Curriculum guidelines set. 1 year training Course at KTC.	Teachers paid by communities. Substantial assistance from UNICEF, BELS and USP. Very rapid recent growth in ECE. (150 in 2000). Mostly run by NGOs.
Marshall Islands	No clear policy. Head Start program in Majuro run by MOE, also on outer islands-caters for about 70% pre-schoolers. Little Emphasis is given to ECE in Education Master Plan.	ECE mostly in urban areas. Only about 14-15% of pre-schoolers receive ECE. USP centre runs model ECE centre to help teacher training. (Only training offered here). Head Start program entirely NGOs are involved as well.
Nauru	Policy to provide 2 years of ECE to all children.	All state run and funded. Training by USP extension. Support from BELS. Pre-schools attached to primary schools. 75-80% of children receive ECE.
Niue	Fomalization of ECE policy in process.	Attached to primary school. Follows NZ curriculum for Maori pre-schools. 100% attendance by relevant age groups.
Palau	Unclear on policy. Head Start funded by the Federal government	Also 3 pre-school programs run by churches.
	No clear policy. Government has attempted to make ECE 'prep'	All schools run by NGOs and churches. ECE still in its infancy and lacks information on numbers

PNG	section of primary schools from age six. No provision for children below 6.	involved. Many children not receiving ECE.
Samoa	No definite policy but supports ECE initiatives by NGOs, private and mission bodies. National Council established.	Samoa Early Childhood Association has own training programme. Training also from USP. Assistance from UNDP, AIGA Programme and BELS. A growing sector. Registration and Curriculum guidelines recently developed.
Solomon Islands	Policy development in process. National and Provincial co-ordinators in MOE. State role mainly training and advisory. 1 year ECE Course at SICHE.	A rapidly growing sector. Teacher training programme funded by NZODA, UNICEF and BELS.
Tonga	None but the goal is to develop formal ECE programs by 2010.	Tonga Pre-school Association administers ECE, does training, some in association with UNICEF and BELS. Increase in number of pre-schools recently.
Tuvalu	From 1998, clear policy and directives.	Tuvalu Pre-school Association and Council – representatives of pre-schools and teachers. USP extension has organised training attachments in Fiji. Canada Fund has given equipment kits. Teacher training by UNICEF.
Vanuatu	Policy development in process	Active Pre-school Association. Assistance from CUSO, UNICEF, SCF. A developing sector, 349 centres recorded in 1998.

Table 1: Selected particulars in ECE (Sources: EFA 2000 Country reports; UNICEF MTR Review 1997-199; input from BELS ECE co-ordinator).

6.   As ECE to date is very much a community initiative in most countries, current data on the number of centres, teachers and their level of training are limited. However, by supplementing the reported data in recent documents in basic education (EFA 2000, Tavola 2000, Pre-school Council (PPC) Report, 1995) with information from BELS programme records, the following number of ECE centres and teachers in a group of FICs are noted:

Country	No. of Schools	Teachers	Students	Source and Year
Cook Islands	27	28	465	BELS records, 2000
Fiji	420	484	9223	1999 Annual Report, 2000
Kiribati	150	200	4000	BELS records, 2000
Marshall Islands	40	89	1780	BELS records, 2000
Nauru	5	8	120	BELS records, 2000
Niue	1	1	54	EFA report, 2000, MOE
Samoa	120	130	36000	BELS records, 2000
Solomon Islands	243	380	6186	PPCC report, 1995
Tonga	33	71	1042	BELS records, 2000
Tuvalu	14	30	560	BELS records, 2000
Vanuatu	349	408	8169	EFA Report, 2000

Table 2: Number of ECE centres and teachers

7.   A significant regional development in teacher education in ECE over the past two-decades has been the Pacific Pre-School Teachers' Certificate (PPTC), a three-course certificate

programme from Continuing Education, University Extension (USP). The three courses are*: Growing Up in a Pacific Society, Planning Your Pre-School Programme,* and *Managing the Pre-School with Family and Community.* The entry level to this certificate is flexible as the courses are said to be 'at the non-academic level to enable students who do not have a advanced secondary education to enroll' (Report of Pacific Pre-School Council (PPC) Conference, 1995). By 1999, a total of 1134 students completed the certificate from its inception. The table below shows the distribution of students with PPTC by country.

Pacific Preschool Teachers' Certificate (PPTC)

Country	Graduates 1985 – 1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	TOTAL
Cook Islands	4		2	1	5	12
Fiji	320	17	31	22	50	440
Kiribati	19				1	20
Marshall Islands	9	7	15	7	48	86
Nauru	62	5	4		6	77
Niue	6	1	4		1	12
Samoa	59	1	2	4	4	70
Solomon Islands	218	10	17	8	4	257
Tonga	10	5	2	3	3	23
Tuvalu	21		4	5	1	31
Vanuatu	84	17	3		2	106
	812	63	84	50	125	1134

Table 3: PPTC graduates. (Source: Continuing Education, Extension, USP (2001))

8. The USP also offers a Diploma in Early Childhood through Extension mode to those with a B+ grade in PPTC plus B in LL114 or LLF11 and to candidates with a pass in Pacific Senior Leaving Certificate (PSSC). The progamme consists of five core courses *(Early Childhood Development, The Young Child in the South Pacific Family, Curriculum in ECE, Leadership in ECE,* and *Practicum in ECE*), and three option courses from the relevant disciplines. (USP Calendar 2000, page 175). To date, 13 candidates have graduated with Diploma in Early Childhood from the USP.

9. Continued commitment to ECE by UN agencies, notably UNICEF, and by various NGOs and voluntary and community groups has been a positive feature of ECE in the FICs. There has been significant regional and bilateral assistance in the ECE area, mainly in training (Table 1 refers). The collaboration has led to an increased awareness of the significant role of ECE in children's education and to much-needed training and support for ECE teachers. Similarly, the Pacific Pre-School Council and its thirteen affiliated national associations have exerted a strong influence on ECE developments in the South Pacific. Established in 1980, the Council has been actively involved in promoting a general awareness of early childhood education in the region and in the professional development of pre-school teachers. Its professional role includes its role in establishing the certificate course jointly with the USP Extension and UNICEF, and its continuing interest in the diploma (Diploma in EC) programme based in the Department of Education and Psychology, SOH, USP. The national pre-school associations had a key role in running in-country training workshops for its members with funding assistance from various development partners (Report, 1995, Tavola 2000).

2.2 Issues in ECE

10. ECE is in its formative stage in terms of policy development, curriculum and teacher education. It is however, being endorsed by all FICs as a vital first level in children's education. A number of organisations and development partners (UNICEF, NZODA, AusAID, USP and Pacific Pre-School Council with its affiliated associations) have contributed to promoting ECE services in the FIC countries. At the ground level, ECE is very much an educational provision spearheaded and run by non-government organisations with the exception of a few countries such as Nauru and Niue. Increasingly though, there is state assistance with training for teachers in the field and recently, with pre-service training. Small groups of about 15 teachers are now being trained at LTC, KTC and SICHE.

11. There are a number of weak spots that characterise the present ECE situation in the FICs: generally low level of academic base of pre-school teachers, lack of pre-service training, lower status of pre-school teachers in terms of employment conditions and career path, uneven distribution of ECE centres within the country and, poor quality of educational environment and resources in many ECE centres. Paucity of data on ECE generally is a major drawback as well. The following reply from a national resource person on ECE to the author typifies this constraint, "I could not get any reliable reports or statistics on ECE. So you will find that the information I am providing may not be very exciting".

12. In-service education for teachers is presently being run on an *ad hoc* basis with the intensity and scope increasing during the phase of donor funded projects, such as training under NZODA project in Solomon Islands, UNICEF funding in Fiji and Kiribati. Calls for access to formal pre-service training for ECE teachers and for the recognition of the status of ECE teachers vis-à-vis primary and secondary teachers in the country (PPC Report 1995), underlines the need for bringing plans forward for meeting the immediate needs of ECE in the FICs.

13. There is now an opportunity for FICs to assess their pre-service provisions against the level of commitment espoused in the BELS *ECE Policy Guidelines* (1999) which have been circulated to all BELS member countries. The *Guidelines* contain suggestions regarding a comprehensive policy for ECE and on establishment and operation of ECE centres. (Curriculum Guidelines are under preparation at IOE, USP and it is planned to distribute these soon to the BELS member countries).

14. PPTC and Diploma in ECE (USP) also provide a framework for possible national pre-service courses (with suitable adjustments) to meet local needs and circumstances. It needs to be noted, however, that PPTC in itself is not meant to give the Certificate holders 'qualified teacher status' (QTS), rather it is a continuing education course and supervised teaching practice has not been a component of PPTC in the past.

15. Noting the strong desire on the part of the FICs to upgrade the provision of ECE in partnership with NGOs and communities, and the need to have fully-trained teachers teach at this level in the future, the following suggestions are made:

- Parallel to the present efforts (short national training workshops and externally funded training for teachers in schools, PPTC and Diploma in Early Childhood), the recently instituted one-year upgrading courses at training institutions be continued until those teachers presently in ECE with reasonable academic background are trained;
- Bridging courses for those with PPTC be held as transition from this qualification to a QTS in each country; and
- Serious consideration be given now to establishing a full two-year pre-school teachers' certificate at the national training institutions in line with the training for primary teachers and for employing the ECE graduates on the same terms and conditions of service as their primary counterparts in the future.

16. The above suggestions will continue to require collaborative efforts which characterise the provision of ECE in the FICs presently, particularly in the areas of physical facilities and resources for teaching and learning.

3. Primary Education and Teachers

17. In comparison to ECE, primary education is a significant component of FICs plans and policies for basic education. Its potential in laying a firm foundation for further education and as a prerequisite for development is acknowledged. Through joint government and community initiatives, primary education in most FICs has advanced to a stage where access to schooling for primary school children is widely available. The concern in countries which have achieved a high level of universal access to primary education is rightly shifting to ensuring the relevance and quality of education being provided at this level. Looking at the Fiji situation, for example, the Fiji Education Commission (2000) found that:

> A major concern of successive governments since independence has been to ensure equality of access to educational facilities for all children. Efforts to improve quality were subsumed by pressing needs to meet the demands of quantitative expansion … A logical next step is for Fiji to make efforts to improve the quality of education offered in educational institutions throughout the country (p.48)

18. Having looked at the budget for education in fourteen FICs, Tavola (2000) points out:

> Although FICs spend a large proportions of their budgets on education, basic education receives proportionately less than other sectors in many countries, considering the larger populations that benefit from primary, compared to other sectors of education (p.3)

19. Summary data on a number of primary schools and teachers for selected countries in the USP region are given in the table below.

Country	Schools	Teachers	Students	T-P Ratio	% of untrained teachers	Notes
Cook Islands	29	134	2379	17.7	12	Source: Education Digest 2000, MOE
Fiji	715	5,061	142,621	28.2	2.3	Annual Report 2000, MOE
Kiribati	86	687	17,557	25.5	21	Education Digest 2000, MOE
Marshall Islands	80	554	14,672	1:28	20	BELS Records, 2000
Nauru	9	101	1692	17	22	School List 2000, MOE
Niue	1	12	282	23.5	nil	EFA Report 2000, MOE
Samoa	162	1436	36 399	23.1	5	Education Statistics 2000, Department of Education
Solomon Islands	568	2494	87 000	35	29	Ministry of Education, letter 26/2/01
Tonga	117	745	16,551	22.2	2.7	Annual report 1999, MOE
Tuvalu	9	82	464	20	nil	BELS Records, 2000
Vanuatu	350	1,188	34,366	28.9	53.5	EFA 2000, Dept of Ed and HRD

Table 4: Particulars on Primary schools

20. National teacher training institutions in a number of FICs are geared specifically for pre-service training of primary teachers. Some of these colleges have recently launched one-year training courses in ECE and Special Education and most are getting more involved in upgrading in-service courses for serving teachers. A summary of particulars on primary teacher training institutions in several countries is given below.

Country	Institution	Duration of Training & Qualification	Capacity (No of trainees)	Recent Teacher Education Initiatives
Cook Islands	CITC	2 years: Diploma	50	- Upgrading teachers skills, (BELS, and NZODA Inclusive Education programs. - In-service under ADB/CI Education Development project.
Fiji	LTC CCTC Fulton	2 years: Certificate & 1 year Certificate in ECE 3 years: Certificate 3 years: Diploma	400 70 175	- AusAID BEMTUP project (in-servie training for upper primary teachers and LTC upgrade) - BELS in-service training.
Kiribati	KTC	3 Years: Diploma 2 years: Upgrading 1 year: Certificate in ECE	150 20 15	- NZODA TEQIP program at KTC (upgrading of courses, teaching resources) - BELS in-service trainng
Samoa	Faculty of Education (NUS)	3 years: Diploma of Education (Courses for pre-school training since 1999)	(300 if required)	- AusAID projects: primary/infant education materials. - UNDP&UNESCO: AIGA program (BELS related interventions mainly). - BELS in-service training
Solomon Islands	SICHE	2 years: Certificate in Primary Teaching (and Certificate in ECE)	260	- DFID curriculum development project - AusAID: Literacy project - BELS in-service training

Tonga	Tonga IOE	3 years: Diploma 2 years: Upgrading Course for trained teachers	330	- AusAID&NZODA; in-service and curriculum development. NZODA: Schools Project (training, institutional strengthening, resources) - BELS in-service training
Vanuatu	VTC	2 years: Certificate (for two groups, Anglophone and Francophone)	250	- AusAID: primary school project - BELS in-service training

Table 5: Particulars on teacher training institutions. (Source: information on courses- 1998 Report on Principals consultation, IOE, USP and MOE reports (1999); on recent projects – Tavola (2000) and BELS programme, IOE, USP.

21. The training institutions have experienced a high rate of change in the past few decades. Each in its own way is trying to meet the expected demand for primary teachers and provide pre-service training at a feasible level, considering the calibre of candidates for teacher training, staffing and other essential resources and conditions at the training institutions.

3.1 Primary Teachers – Supply and In-Service Needs

22. Available official documents from the education authorities generally seem to stop at summaries of enrolment in schools and the numbers of teachers. Statistics showing projections on supply of teachers and teacher shortage are not readily available. It has been difficult to ascertain whether projections on teacher supply are actually generated from the available data bases or not. The following comments from the recent Fiji Education Commission (Report, FIEC 2000) alludes to this kind of difficulty:

> although the Research and Development Division of the MOE has the capacity through its data bases to develop projections on teacher supply needs, it does not appear to do any medium or long-term planning in this area (p.377).

23. In the absence of such projections, it seems that a pragmatic approach of taking annual stock of actual staffing needs in schools based on the school enrolment, becomes the guiding rule for both posting teachers and estimating future demand.

24. Teacher-Pupil (T-P) ratios, the widely reported indicator of the state of affairs relating to the staffing of schools, can only be a rough guide to the actual staffing situation in the field. The T-P ratio does not capture the existence of large classes in urban areas nor the small ones in the remote rural schools. However, at the practical level, combined with the number of teaching units (groups of same year level within prescribed limits, the upper limit in some countries being 50 under one teacher), the ratio is seen as a useful indicator of the number of teachers needed in a school at a certain point in time. Other relevant factors such as multi-class teaching and languages to be taught also come into play.

25. The T-P ratios indicate a wide range of staffing situations in FICs. Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, and Tonga report ratios within the 1:15 –24 range while Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have ratios in the 1:25- 35 range (Table 4). The point that needs emphasising here is that given the increasing capacity in most FICs in terms of data collection

and processing, it should not be too difficult to work out both the extent of current teacher shortage and projections on teacher supply for the future.

26. The table below indicates the percentage of untrained teachers in selected FICs and also includes comments on the type of in-service needs in the respective countries.
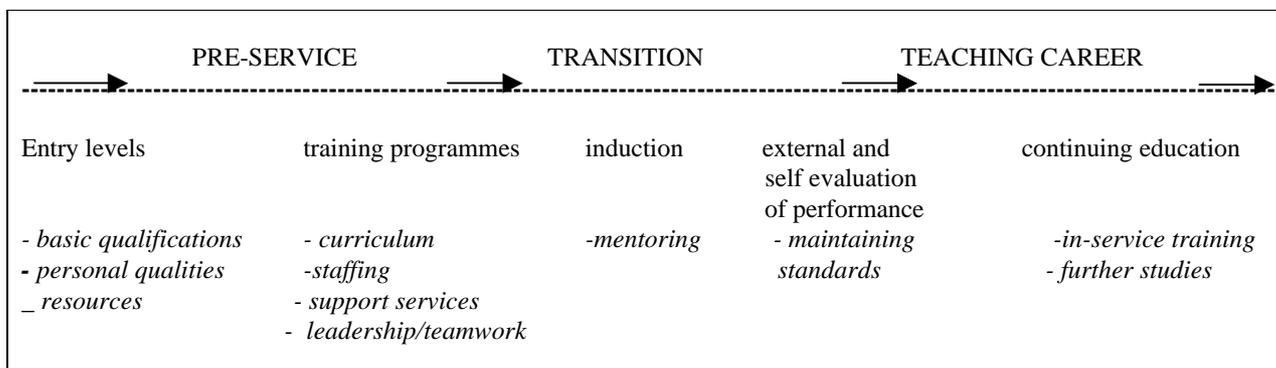
Country	% untrained	Training needs
Cook Islands	12	• Enhance the status of the 12% uncertified teachers through upgrading and training. • 35% of primary teachers are over 50 years of age. Their need would seem to be greatest for upgrading course. • Professional development for commitment and creative teaching within constraints has been suggested also as a topic for consideration for in-service workshops.
Fiji	2.3	• Formal pre-service training for the small group noted here. • 40% of the primary teachers are noted as having form 5 or lower education. Their need would seem to be in the area of general upgrading through intensive courses. • 36.9% of teachers were trained more than twenty years ago. Their need for refresher courses become more important if they have been teaching most of the time in rural areas.
Kiribati	21	• formal training for the group comprising 21% untrained teachers. • Upgrading courses for teachers with form 5 or lower in the field (already begun at KTC). • Specific need areas include proficiency in English language and multiple class teaching.
Marshall Is	20	• Formal training for the 20% untrained teachers. • Upgrading courses for teachers trained 10 years or more.
Nauru	22	• Provision of formal pre-service training to the trainee teachers is a priority. • Induction of teachers trained abroad as an on-going activity to ensure that local curriculum and conditions are appreciated.
Samoa	5	• 5% primary teachers are noted as uncertified. • Those in the field comprise 32% Diploma and 63% TTC Certificate holders. Upgrading courses for the certificate holders is a pertinent consideration.
Solomon Islands	29	• Provision of formal training to the 29% untrained teachers noted. • Workshops to introduce new curriculum materials to all teachers in the field.
Tonga	2.7	• Formal training for the small group noted as uncertified. • Upgrading course for class 1 teachers and for those sitting service exams at TIOE (already in progress). • Specific need areas such as proficiency in English to be considered.
Tuvalu	nil	• On-going short courses to introduce local curriculum to new teachers trained abroad.
Vanuatu	53.5	• Formal training to increase the number of trained teachers for primary schools.

Table 6: Training needs in FICs. Source: Communication with MOE Officers, 2001.

3.2 A Teacher Education Continuum

27. A large number of factors are known to contribute to the quality of teachers that come out of the training institutions. These include the entry qualifications and qualities of trainees, and the quality of the pre-service training programmes. The latter is dependent to a large extent on the

qualifications and professional expertise of training staff as well as the resources and support services available to implement the programmes effectively. Holistically, enhancing the professional standards of teachers would seem to involve a number of elements from the point of entry into the training institutions to the advanced stages of a person's teaching career. The key points that mark the teacher education continuum would include the following:

	PRE-SERVICE	TRANSITION		TEACHING CAREER
Entry levels	training programmes	induction	external and self evaluation of performance	continuing education
- *basic qualifications*	- *curriculum*	-*mentoring*	- *maintaining standards*	-*in-service training*
- *personal qualities*	-*staffing*			- *further studies*
_ *resources*	- *support services*			
	- *leadership/teamwork*			

28. Ideally, instituting quality assurance strategies at each key point would enhance the chances of producing teachers with suitable teaching credentials which are on par with the emerging professional expectations generally. Professional expectations primarily cover a sound academic base and certain desirable qualities in the prospective candidates for teaching, provision of a good quality pre-service teacher education programme, on-going professional development for teachers and conditions that are conducive for effective teaching.

29. Virtually all training institutions noted in this paper are reportedly being used to full capacity (Report on Principals' Consultation, 1998). Physical and infra-structural developments are envisaged for most institutions to increase their capacity through extensions or upgrading of the existing facilities to meet the increasing demand for both pre and in-service education. (For example, the above mentioned Report notes that additional physical resources and facilities are being planned by the respective controlling authorities for LTC, Fulton College, KTC, Tonga IOE and VTC).

30. The recruitment of teacher trainees with desirable academic qualifications and personal qualities is dependent on the pool of prospective candidates in each situation. Fiji, for example, has the luxury of choosing around 150 prospective trainees from an annual pool of as large as eight thousand applicants, with a majority of applicants possessing reasonable credentials. The data on recruitment for Fiji for the period 1997-1999 also indicate a dramatic increase in the number of applicants:

	Number applied	Number interviewed	Number selected
1997	2846	618	180
1998	9130	450	150
1999	8951	600	150

31. On the other hand, there is a very limited pool of eligible candidates in smaller systems. KTC, for instance, usually attracts about 200 applications of which about 80 are short-listed for selecting for 20 places.

32. It is generally being perceived by the education authorities in the FICs that secondary education, at least up to form six, is a reasonable minimum entry qualification into a pre-service course. There is a growing body of research in developed countries that shows a positive correlation between the subject-matter knowledge of teachers and the students' learning achievements taught by these teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). (The implications of such findings for upgrading the qualifications of teachers with very low qualifications in the service are obvious. The proposal for upgrading English language competencies of primary teachers in some countries, discussed later in the paper also relates to the initial academic achievement of trainees in English before entering the training institutions).

33. The trend evident in FICs is to upgrade the minimum entry qualification as secondary education develops further. In this regard, establishing selection procedures for catching the best available trainees is an important matter and deserves serious attention. The procedures normally require a short-listing of eligible candidates, an interview to assess personal qualities and aptitude for teaching, and a final selection to reflect pre-determined requirements such as quota on the basis of gender and in some cases ethnicity. Where the established procedures are compromised, there is a danger that the best candidates available can be missed out. Costs, transport and communication constraints have been noted as posing difficulties in getting the candidates for interviews, for example, in the case of KTC. The recent Fiji Education Commission (Report 2000) has also noted lack of involvement of lecturers in the selection process as a matter of concern.

34. As both a sound academic base and positive personal qualities are important factors in the selection of candidates for teacher education, adherence to the selection criteria and reliability in interviews become important considerations.

3.4 Quality of Teacher Training Programmes, Staffing and Resources

35. International literature in teacher education (Darling-Hammond, 2000, Ramsey, 2000) and reports on training programmes in the Pacific region, (e.g. Singh, 1993, Benson, et al, 1993, Singh and Booth, 1998, Dow, 1996, Kataonga, 2000), highlight the need to address the issues of the quality and relevance of pre-service courses and the quality of staff at teacher education institutions.

36. What constitutes a sound pre-service programme? The answer is alluded to in the phrase 'learning what and how to teach' (Delors et al UNESCO Report, 1996). The Delors Report goes on to point out that in this age of rapid change, initial training will not see the teachers through the rest of their lives and that they need to update their knowledge and techniques through-out their careers as teachers. On initial training, the Report notes:

> A careful balance has to be struck between competence in subject taught and competence in teaching. In some countries, the system is criticized for neglecting method; in others, overemphasis on method, it is felt, produces teachers who know too little about their subject. Both are needed: neither should be sacrificed to the other in initial or in-service training (p. 149).

37. Teacher Education programmes are essentially structured around general liberal education, subject disciplines and professional studies. The last component includes supervised teaching experience in schools or practicum.

38. Guidelines such as those prepared by TEQIP for KTC and BEMTUP for LTC are helpful as starting points for revision and on-going monitoring of pre-service courses. TEQIP, for example, postulated the following underlying principles for the programmes at KTC:

- Teaching is a professional activity
- A teacher education programme is more than acquiring a narrow set of knowledge about teaching
- A teacher education programme should encourage reflection and critical thinking
- Theory and practice are mutually supportive in a teacher education programme
- A teacher education programme should recognise that teaching occurs in a variety of contexts.

39. Furthermore, due to the changing and dynamic nature of curriculum, it would seem imperative that more investment be directed towards professional development of staff rather than relying on visiting experts to maintain quality in pre-service courses.

40. There is also an on-going project spearheaded by the USP based UNESCO Chair in Teacher Education and Culture and being run in collaboration with the IOE, USP and Pacific Association of Teacher Educators (PATE) which aims to promote the incorporation of elements of Pacific cultures into the curricula of teacher education courses. A study involving nine training institutions from the USP region during 1997 (Thaman, 2000), found that less than 20% of the course contents were derived from the students' home cultures and that "while many teacher educators in the region are taking students' cultural backgrounds and contexts into consideration in selecting their teaching methods and assessment procedures, few do this in relation to selecting course content" (Thaman, 2000:10). A number of publications have also been prepared within this project for teacher educators and distributed to the training institutions in the USP region (Thaman, 2000; Taufe'ulungaki, 2000; Nabobo, 2000; Sanga, 2000 and Tupuola, 2000).

41. However, while there is a general acknowledgement of the need to upgrade the pre-service programmes, the practice is lagging behind for various reasons (constraints such as limited resources and other priorities being noted as the common ones).

42. Two cases help illustrate this point. Through BEMTUP, upper primary courses in four subjects (English, Mathematics, Science and Social Science) were upgraded at LTC in terms of contents and pedagogy in 1998. This had repercussions on the nature and quality of other courses in the two-year programme and has necessitated a revision of the entire college curriculum.

43. Similarly, the TEQIP at KTC accomplished the re-writing of all college courses by 1999. However, with the upgrading of facilities and staff lagging behind, the impact of TEQIP is likely to remain minimal.

44. There is acceptance of the fact that the quality of staff at training institutions is a key factor in the type of teachers that a country inherits. All principals attending the 1998 IOE Consultation endorsed the need for adequate staffing in terms of number of staff to teach all subjects on the timetable and qualities and academic qualifications of lecturers. In this regard, two relatively new courses offered by USP, B Ed (Primary) and Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching (GCTT), are worth noting for their relevance to staff development at the training institutions.

45. Resources for college lecturers and students also deserve special attention. Adequate library facilities, access to information technology and proper physical facilities for teaching a wide range of subjects, play a significant role in promoting life-long learning skills in future teachers.

46. It is therefore important to continue efforts in upgrading existing training programmes, staffing and resources concurrently in order to derive maximum benefits in changes in these key areas of teacher education.

3.4 Induction of Beginning Teachers

47. On taking up their first appointment the support that beginning teachers get from colleagues at the school and from their college supervisors, is a missing link in teacher education in most of the FICs. Beginning teachers are left to fend for themselves with ad hoc assistance provided by the school heads and staff when approached. Guided entry into teaching requires an induction period with continuing involvement of staff from training institutions, and the head teacher and colleagues at the school level. Khamis (2000) points out:

> The first teaching assignment may find the novice in conflict with school norms, procedures and structures. It is often difficult to teach in a specific way, and compromises must be made between what the novice would like to do and what is actually 'possible' or 'permissible' according to the dictates of the supervisor/principal and the prevailing school, culture within a particular school (p. 6).

48. First perceptions influence a new teacher's definition of what teaching is all about and is likely to exert a strong influence on the teacher's future attitudes towards teaching and learning generally. There is also a danger that under pressure novice teachers may accept 'survival' strategies copied from experienced colleagues as valid teaching behaviours and in the process shed some of the pedagogical knowledge and skills learnt during the training, judging them prematurely as less valid and less effective.

49. There is encouraging anecdotal evidence of beginning teachers finding the knowledge and skills learnt during their initial training highly relevant and useful at the classroom level. Singh and Booth (1998) interviewed a group of fresh graduates from LTC on the their experience in teaching Maths, English, Social Science and Science at the upper primary level. The respondents provided highly positive feedback on strategies of teaching they learnt at the college including

50. use of activity methods, concept charts, resource files charts and models were all quoted as examples of effective strategies. However, the teachers also commented on certain difficulties they faced as beginning teachers:

> Lack of resources such as base blocks in Maths made me use demonstration methods instead and these were not as effective; there is limited science equipment in the school and this frustrates attempts to teach science in all classes; the noise level from activity methods was not acceptable to head teacher: "I have been informed my class is too noisy." (p. 60).

50. The one concern shared by new teachers was the lack of understanding by their head teachers about the new approaches being promoted and taught at the College through BEMTUP.

51. Such anecdotal reports reinforce the point made earlier about the need for planned induction of beginning teachers into the schools. Follow-up studies on the experiences of beginning teachers by national teacher training institutions should also help ascertain the transfer-value of pre-service training to classroom teaching. At present, this is one area in teacher education that has not received much attention by teacher educators in the region generally.

52. It is, therefore, strongly suggested that 'induction' be included as a part of support service to beginning teachers and that the involvement of training institutions, field staff, CDU and the schools be formalised. The strategy would also benefit the training institutions through valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the pre-service training programmes.

3.5 *Externally Funded Projects at Training Institutions*

53. Teacher education is being targeted as a beneficiary of development assistance in a number of countries in the region. The benefits of teacher upgrading projects at LTC, KTC and Tonga IOE have already been noted earlier. However, the issue of sustainability of changes after the completion of the specific projects has been raised as a matter of concern by those involved with such projects. While aid projects, marked by considerable input by the external personnel and resources, make a difference during their active life span, there are not many records of the momentum being maintained once the projects officially terminate. In fact, locals often begin to predict difficulties in sustaining the level and scope of implementation well before the end of the project. This came through clearly in these comments by the principal of the Tonga IOE recently on the future of TSIP:

> There are conditions and situations which put the achievement of the project at risk. Staffing is one. Maintaining a stable staff when postings are made annually which leads to lack of sustainability as people take the new skills with them before they are fully embedded in the organisation. Lack of appropriate resources for all courses and the poor physical condition of the buildings are also constraints. Flow of information from the TMOE to TIOE takes time, which affect the quality time management and quality assurance in keeping with the terms of reference (p.9).

54. The above concerns point to the need for sound management of funded projects and for developing effective strategies for sustaining the projects beyond their formal time-frames.

3.6 Types of in-service education courses

55. In assessing the in-service needs of primary teachers, one is guided by certain assumptions regarding teachers' standards and the expected pedagogical practice of teachers. Literature on teacher education would suggest the following three assumptions as being fairly widely held: first, in order to enhance quality in teaching there is a need to promote professionalism in teachers; second, that in order to achieve this goal, teachers require in-depth knowledge of subjects they teach and of Education Studies; and thirdly, in order to be successful, teachers should possess a high degree of competence in teaching skills.

56. In this paper, the in-service needs identified for groups of teachers (Table 6) are based on the above assumptions. With reference to this table, the following types of courses appear relevant for addressing the training needs identified.

a) Pre-service Programme for Untrained Teachers

57. A group of untrained teachers are noted in Table 6. In the light of the above assumptions, it is clear that such teachers need to be given the benefit of full teacher training as soon as possible. This position is supported by strong research evidence that points out that pupils taught by untrained teachers are disadvantaged in their learning and that such pupils remain 'at risk' of being unsuccessful in their future attempts in education (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

b) Upgrading Programmes for Partially Trained Teachers

58. Partially trained teachers are those that have either undergone a short 'emergency' type of training or those who have undergone training programmes now judged to be of lower quality due to existing constraints and available options. The latter seems to be the rationale for the recently introduced upgrading course for teachers trained in the past in Kiribati and Tonga. Studies of teachers admitted with less than full preparation, for example, through very short courses, have found that such teachers tend to be less satisfied with their training, and they tend to have greater difficulties planning curriculum, teaching, managing the classroom, and diagnosing students' learning needs (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Lack of such crucial teaching skills are said have a negative impact on the quality of pupils' learning achievement.

59. The number of teachers in this category in each country remains unidentified. Yet it would seem quite certain that there are substantial numbers in this category due mainly to the fact that there have been a variety of types and levels of courses that teachers completed in the past.

60. In terms of formulating the courses for teachers returning for upgrading, it would be desirable to analyse the areas in which teachers have weaknesses and target those areas during training. Giving teachers 'more of the same' may not be the answer if their existing needs are not addressed in the courses on offer.

c) Short "Refresher" Courses and School-Based Training for Serving Teachers

61. The third group are those who have been in the service for a number of years and are in need of refresher courses to keep abreast of changes and new developments in teaching and related

areas e.g. Short workshops run by CDUs to introduce new curriculum materials. There is also an increased emphasis, through programmes such as BELS, on the value of school-based training with selected teachers acting as facilitators and trainers. This mode of training is very much in line with the suggestion made later on promoting professionalism in teaching as a long-term goal for the FICs.

d) In-Service Courses to Meet Specific Needs

62. Each situation may warrant in-service training to meet specific needs of serving teachers. Two such needs are highlighted in the examples below.

Example 1: A 6-9 week course in Language Proficiency

63. One area of concern that has emerged over the years as affecting the quality of teaching and learning in most countries is that of the teaching of languages (English and vernaculars) and the chosen medium of instruction for primary school children. Countries differ in their language policies, with some giving more emphasis to national vernaculars throughout the primary level while others begin with an emphasis on vernacular for the first four years and then change to using English as the medium of instruction.

64. PILL tests have alerted the authorities on the sub-standard achievement of groups of students on literacy tests, with a larger group deemed to be at risk in English rather than in vernacular and numeracy.

65. However, there has been no systematic assessment of teachers' own competence in these subjects, apart from the results obtained by them in high school examinations used for entry into training institutions. It is true also that teachers who were trained some years ago would have entered the institutions with lower examination qualifications compared to the ones entering now. From anecdotal reports (and based on Fiji's experience in the sixties), it is being suggested here that there exists a specific problem in many FICs which concerns the teachers' own level of competence in English, and to an extent in vernacular languages. In the face of this lack, attempts at curriculum changes and promoting methodologies such as the whole language approach (BELS, 1993-2000) can only achieve limited success.

66. In fact, when curriculum changes do not match the existing level of teacher skills and conditions in classrooms, there is a greater chance of poor implementation of changes by the teachers. A point well stressed by the UNESCO World Education Report (1998):

> Initiatives to reform school curricula, for example, could not be followed up successfully in many countries without taking into account the very heterogeneous composition of the teaching force which would have to implement the new curricula in school (p. 27).

67. Parallel to launching in-service courses to enhance teachers' personal knowledge of subjects such as English, a suitable approach to developing curriculum materials to match the level of teacher competencies needs to be worked out for each locality/country. It would seem advisable to continue helping teachers who need help (due to limited training or qualifications) with a style

of curriculum which is structured and detailed, giving as much help as possible to the teachers, in order to ensure that at least a minimum level of quality is maintained in their teaching.

Example 2: A 6-9 week course in teaching composite/multi-classes

68. Composite and multi-class teaching is not a new feature of primary teaching in the FICs (Collingwood, 1991). It continues to be perceived as a 'problem' by the teachers and teacher organisations. On the other hand, there is a strong educational argument that all classes in essence depict multi-levels within its members and that, contrary to commonly held views by teachers, composite and multi-classes lend themselves well for interactive group teaching, with an accent on children learning at their own level and pace (Singh, 1986, 1993; Fiji Education Report, 2000). Composite and multi-class teaching, though decreasing in some countries, is still sufficiently widespread in a number of countries to warrant special attention from teachers and teacher educators.

e) Provisions for Continuing Education

69. Provisions for continuing education and appropriate rewards for individual achievements are essential for personal growth of teachers and for enhancing teachers' capacities for increasing responsibilities that they are required to shoulder as they progress in their careers. This is an accepted strategy in most states' Human Resource Development planning. The need for academically and professionally qualified teacher educators to fill positions at the training institutions, and at curriculum and assessment units, makes continuing education all the more important for the FICs at the present time.

70. In addition to providing training to all untrained teachers in the FICs, in-service education is also a priority area mainly due to the varying quality of teacher education that was possible in the past.

3.7   Some General Constraints in Teacher Education

71. Addressing the need for staffing all primary schools with qualified and trained teachers requires additional resources, financial and human, in countries that are experiencing a shortage of trained teachers and which also have a large number of teachers whose initial preparation has been inadequate. These constraints continue to impact negatively on a number of fundamental areas in teacher education: the capacity of training institutions to upgrade their present in-service programmes and to deliver the programmes effectively; and the capacity of the education systems to meet the in-service needs of existing teachers. The present approach which is being used with considerable success in countries such as Fiji, Tonga and Kiribati, is the adoption of externally funded projects for institutional strengthening and the delivery of teacher training programmes.

72. The attraction of the teaching profession to prospective trainees is also a matter of concern, as not all countries are able to attract the most able students to join teaching. Factors contributing to this situation vary considerably from country to country. For example, the following strategies are being considered in one country: promotional campaigns, overall improvements in salary scales and bonuses for outstanding performance by individual teachers.

4. Teaching: Towards Enhancing Quality

a) *The Quality of School Buildings, Classrooms and Teaching and Learning Resources*

> Improved learning outcomes can hardly be expected of schools, or of educational institutions generally, if the conditions under which teaching and learning take place are not conducive (World Education Report, 1998, p.54).

73. While EFA reports (UNESCO, 2000) which are based on enrolments provide a positive picture in terms of access to schooling for the primary school-age children in most of the FICs, one needs to be wary of seeing the situation to mean that these children attend schools with similar educational conditions. With the increasing use of computer technology, some countries are known to be collating information on the conditions of their schools including buildings, classrooms, furniture, teaching and learning resources, etc., and using this information to plan for upgrading of the overall educational conditions in the schools.

74. Nevertheless, as is argued below by Beeby (1969), educational planners often overlook the question of the 'nitty-gritty' of teaching and learning (such as books, materials for art and craft, music, physical education, science and social science) which then becomes a real constraint in promoting qualitative changes:

> These things are too humble to find their way into the awesome literature of modern educational planning, but, for the teacher in the classroom, they can make the difference between archaic instruction and a new vision of his job. Clarion calls for the relevance of education, or for teaching students to think, have precious little chance of being heard in barren classrooms where young children have nothing to think about but symbols in chalk and ink (p.52).

75. The BELS programme experience generally indicates that as one moves out into rural areas, primary schools begin to show serious limitations in terms of physical conditions and the quality and range of basic teaching and learning resources for both teachers and students (Singh, 1997).

76. In one of the impact studies conducted by the BELS Programme (Elley, Singh and Lumelume, Report on the Tonga Study, 1999), an attempt was made to match the achievement of students in a class against the exposure the students had to good quality reading materials. Each class was rated on a 10 point scale, according to the number of books in the classroom and the frequency of reading to children, shared and silent reading in the classroom. The relationship was positive and high (r=0.67) in favour of the classes that were rated as 'high' compared to the ones that received low rating.

77. Similar results were obtained from the level of implementation in the Fiji impact study. The level of implementation was arrived at after rating 7 related criteria on a scale of 3 to 0 for 20 classrooms in the sample. The criteria included: availability of reading books, frequency of reading and writing sessions per week, display of high interest books and the training the teachers received in literacy education. The mean literacy scores recorded were as follows:

Year 3				Year 4		
Level of Implementation	No. of classes	Reading Mean %	Listening Mean %	No. of classes	Reading Mean %	Listening Mean %
High Level	4	42.6%	56.3%	3	35.2%	49.7%

Medium Level	4	32%	44%	3	32.2%	37.1%
Low Level	2	25.5%	29.8%	4	24.1%	28.9%

Table 7: Relationship between level of implementation and mean scores (Fiji Impact Study, Elley, Singh &Elder, 2000. P. 11)

78. The data in the above tables underline the importance of suitable reading resources and training for teachers in literacy education in raising children's achievement in literacy.

b) Curriculum

79. Teachers' efforts in promoting quality in children's learning are also heavily influenced by the quality of curriculum available to them either through the national CDUs or other similar sources. In centralised education systems, teachers rely heavily on textbooks, teachers' guides, pupils' workbooks, and teaching aids prescribed by the authorities. In this situation, availability of materials and training for teachers on implementing the suggested contents and methods, are important considerations. Furthermore, poor quality materials limit the chances of students' learning and becoming real obstacles in their overall development.

c) Assessing Learning Achievements: BELS PILL Tests and Impact Studies

80. The findings of BELS Pacific Islands Literacy Levels (PILL) tests and the series of impact studies that the Programme conducted on literacy achievements of primary school pupils indicate that there is a lot to be done in order to enhance learning achievements of pupils in our classrooms. Our teachers and educators conventionally use norm-referenced assessment, which provides information on the performance of the individual student compared to that of the cohort being tested. The PILL tests, on the other hand, are basically criterion-referenced tests, which provide information on a child's achievement as seen against set criteria formulated on the basis of expected outcomes of teaching and learning. The PILL tests in literacy use five levels of performance, each reflecting a progressive mastery of language skills from lowest to the highest expected level in the particular year of schooling. By grouping children into levels, the tests provide hard data on the percentage of pupils who are performing well, who are in the middle levels and who fall in the lowest levels. Children in the lowest level are seen to be 'at risk' unless interventions are made to help them grasp the basics expected of children in that year group.

81. Since the introduction of PILL tests, the twelve BELS countries have collected data on achievement levels of year 4 and 6 children in literacy and numeracy (including vernacular language in many cases). The data are confidential to each country and are best interpreted nationally. Suffice to say here that the PILL tests have indicated that one cannot equate school attendance with achievement and that while the results have positive elements, there are a substantial group of children who are deemed to be 'at risk' in their future learning.

82. Similarly, as mentioned earlier, the BELS programme conducted a series of six studies trying to assess the impact of its interventions, particularly of in-service training of teachers in literacy education, on students' levels of literacy achievement. The results in all countries are similar to the PILL tests but the studies also looked at the level of implementation of the suggested approach for teaching literacy and the impact of reading resources. There were substantial

differences in the achievement levels of pupils whose teachers had implemented enriched literacy approaches compared to those pupils who were not exposed to such approaches (Elley, Singh and Lumelume, 1999; Elley, Singh and Elder, 2000).

83. Overall, the impact studies showed that schools where teachers had regular training in literacy education, adequate reading materials (supplied or teacher-made) and a supportive school environment, produced much better results in terms of literacy achievement of pupils than schools where these elements were not present.
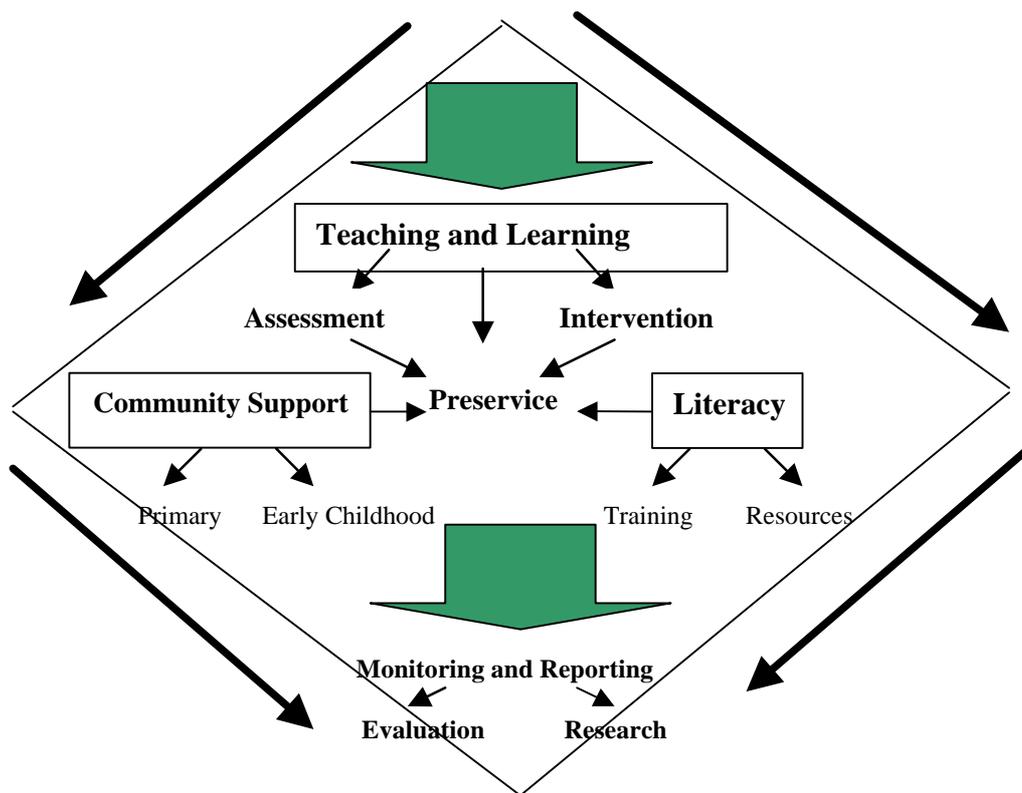
84. The PILL tests and the impact studies serve well as formative evaluation of children's efforts in literacy learning. The test results are helping the authorities to act on aspects seen as requiring more attention such as more in-service training for teachers, more resources, etc. The results also help the teacher to plan appropriate interventions to help the groups of children assessed as belonging to a particular level of achievement. As an illustration, consider the following results for a fictitious Year 4 class:

	N=	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	Blank	% at risk
Eng. Writing (Boys)	20	0	3	7	5	3	2	25%
Eng. Writing (Girls)	25	0	7	9	4	4	1	20%
Total	45	0	10	16	9	7	3	22.5%
Eng. Reading (Boys)	20	2	4	6	3	3	2	25%
Eng. Reading (Girls)	25	5	5	6	5	3	1	16%
Total	45	7	9	12	8	6	3	20.5%
Numeracy (Boys)	20	na	5	7	6	2	0	10%
Numeracy (Girls)	25	na	10	8	4	3	0	12%
Toatal	45	na	15	15	10	5	0	11%

Table 8: PILL Levels (Numeracy four levels only)

85. The teacher in this case is likely to reflect further on the factors contributing to the achievement of the group in the 'at risk' category but would also look at ways of helping children move up the levels in English and in Numeracy.

86. It needs to be reiterated, however, that without other investments to improve teaching and schooling, tests alone do not transform learning. The PILL tests and the impact studies have demonstrated that in order to improve the quality of children's learning achievement, teachers require training in new teaching strategies, an adequate amount of teaching and learning resources and effective support from the authorities and the parents. In this respect, the BELS programme presents one example of an integrated framework which seems worth replicating in national in-service programmes in future. The BELS package had three key elements: enhancing teachers' classroom skills, promoting literacy education and parental involvement in promoting children's learning achievements. The integrated approach can be depicted as follows:

Teaching and Learning

Assessment   Intervention

Community Support → **Preservice** ← **Literacy**

Primary   Early Childhood   Training   Resources

Monitoring and Reporting

Evaluation   **Research**

5. Constraints in Implementing the Curriculum

87. Lack of teaching and learning resources, and in some cases, highly impoverished physical conditions of schools and classrooms, pose a real constraint on teachers in their efforts to implement the curriculum effectively and to have a fair chance of raising the basic standards in learning for children in their classes. Numerous specific examples of teachers' pedagogical practices can be advanced to show that the above constraints lead to sub-standard teaching and learning in such classrooms, subsequently frustrating the teachers and lowering their expectations of the level of children's achievement.

88. A contentious system-related constraint is the central role that examinations have come to play in most FICs. While the need for selection for limited places beyond a particular level (usually at Year 6 or 8 at the primary) necessitates selection mechanisms such as examinations, the adverse effects of 'teaching for examinations' is a constraint in many classrooms where non-examination subjects are neglected and the teaching is restricted to the transmission of knowledge, devoid generally of active learner participation and of deeper understanding of what is being learnt (Jenkins and Singh, 1996).

89. The above discussion points out the need to:

a) critically assess the quality of physical facilities, curriculum (in terms of objectives, contents, methods and assessment) and resources for teaching and learning, and

b) take an integrated approach in planning for interventions to improve the quality in these areas, as deemed necessary;

c) further strengthen the current initiatives in promoting the active involvement of the school community in the affairs of the school in order to enhance the quality of facilities and teaching-learning resources.

6. Enhancing Professionalism in Teaching – a Long-Term Goal

90. Teacher education reviews and literature on teacher education (for example, Fiji Education Commission 2000; Ramsey 2000; Dinham and Scott, 2000) lend support to the contention that for enhancing quality in teaching, teaching needs to further develop into a profession reflecting, and being guided by its own ethos, standards and ethics.

91. In this section an attempt will be made to illustrate the intricate nature of professional development of primary teachers should one want to move towards making professionalism a hallmark of teaching in future.

92. In Fiji, for example, the Education Commission (Report, 2000) recommended a number of changes. These include an active role of teachers in curriculum revision, change in the prevalent teaching approach of teachers, reforming the assessment system, and establishing standards in teaching to guide teachers' performance and practice. These are professional matters to the core. In order to bring about changes in these areas, a considerable degree of conceptual re-orientation, on the part of teachers and teacher educators, would be required in the first place. To put it simply, it is the teachers that need to be convinced about the reasons why they should

- play an active role in curriculum planning and development for their classes;
- change from the prevalent teaching approach of passing on the knowledge and skills through transmission mode to more interactive teaching;
- move away from the present system of examinations and preparing children for them; and
- be involved in establishing standards for teaching when to date they have been given these implicitly through the assessment procedures on their performance.

93. Literature on quality in teaching exhorts us to look critically at the possibility of establishing 'standards' that would help both assess teachers' performance and act as a guide to teachers themselves in their moves towards professionalism in their endeavours. One such list of standards compiled by the OECD (quoted in the Fiji Education Report, 2000:421) included the following:

- commitment to students and their learning, the quality that makes all other qualities possible;
- knowledge of substantive curriculum areas and content;
- pedagogic skills, including the acquisition of knowledge and ability to use a range of teaching strategies;
- reflection and the ability to be self-critical, the hallmark of teacher professionalism,
- empathy and acknowledging the dignity of others;

- managerial competence, as teachers assume a wide range of management responsibilities inside and outside the classroom;
- collegiality and collaborative activity, a significant element in the work of quality teachers.

94. Based on similar ideas, there is growing literature which describes the progression in teachers' normal development in their teaching career and the expected commitment from teachers at each stipulated stage. The Standards Council for the Teaching Profession, Victoria, Australia (SCTP, 1999), for example, established four stages of teaching covering five generic dimensions of teachers' responsibilities. These include: professional responsibilities, content of teaching and learning, teaching practice, assessment and reporting of student learning, and interaction with the school and the broader community.

95. Detailed descriptors for each stage under the above generic dimensions provide a guide to the expected level of commitment from a teacher assessed to be at each of the four stages. Those who reach stage 4 generally demonstrate exemplary practice and operate at the level which provides leadership to those at the lower stages.

96. The following descriptors (selected from the SCTP list) illustrate the level of commitment envisaged from teachers who are at the highest stage:

- contribute to discussion on ethical values and behaviours which underpin the profession;
- manage the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of curriculum policy and programmes;
- provide leadership to facilitate successful implementation of school priorities into teaching and learning across the curriculum;
- review assessment and reporting practices within and between schools, and
- provide leadership within the school and broader community by establishing links which improve learning outcomes for students.

97. These descriptors are general enough to be easily contextualised for adoption in any country provided there is a thrust towards enhancing professionalism in teaching. (What seems to be sadly missing in such frameworks, is any expectation of teachers to be involved in research on professional issues as part of their normal role as teachers. This is one area that needs to be developed if teaching were to establish itself an identity as a profession).

98. The above discussion suggests working towards professionalism in teaching as a worthwhile long-term goal for the FICs. This would require collaborative efforts from the employers and the teachers themselves.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

99. Within the context of the central role of teachers in the quality of learning achievement of children, the paper looked at the provisions in teacher education for ECE and primary schools in the FICs. ECE in most countries is at the formative stage but is witnessing a heightened

awareness of its vital role in basic education among all concerned. It is poised for rapid growth and development and requires greater state involvement both at policy and operational levels.

100.   Critical indicators of the quality of primary education used in this paper include the number of untrained teachers in a system; the level and quality of initial training of teachers in the field; the capacity of the teacher training institutions for providing sound teacher education programmes; the nature and extent of in-service training being provided for serving teachers, and the overall environment in schools (as shown by the availability of teaching and learning resources and conditions of classrooms and related physical facilities).

101.   Against this background and the emphasis placed in this paper on enhancing professionalism in teaching the following recommendations are made for the consideration of Ministers:

a.   Early Childhood Education

That while continuing with collaborative efforts with NGOs, church and community organisations in providing ECE to pre-school age children, governments should address resource requirements for ECE teacher training and assess how ECE teachers can obtain the same status and conditions of employment as for their primary counterparts.

b.   Pre-Service Teacher Education

That upgrading of pre-service training programmes, staffing and resources at the training institutions that is either in process or is being anticipated in most training institutions, be fully addressed as a matter of priority.

That induction for beginning teachers is formalised involving teacher training institutions, CDUs, field staff and schools.

That small island states that do not have their own training institutions consider establishing teachers' centres to be used for complementary training of local trainees who are undertaking USP extension courses in Education as a route to a teacher qualification. A substantive position of a co-ordinator of the teachers' centre be established and filled by a qualified teacher educator who would also supervise school-based training of trainees.

c.   In-Service Teacher Education

That existing data bases be further utilised to generate teacher supply projections where necessary and plans be implemented to train all untrained teachers as soon as practicable.

That upgrading programmes be considered for serving teachers who are found to be partially trained as assessed against the level of pre-service training currently being offered in most FIC primary training institutions.

That intensive in-service courses targeting specific needs of teachers such as proficiency in English and skills in multi-class teaching be mounted in countries where teachers need such courses.

d.   Classroom Teaching

In accordance with the local data base on the conditions that exist in schools in terms of the quality of classrooms and physical facilities, attention be paid to upgrading those classrooms which are currently impoverished and provide a sub-standard educational environment for teaching and learning.

e.   Community Support

That the current initiatives in promoting the active involvement of the school community in the affairs of the school be strengthened in order to enhance the quality of facilities and teaching-learning resources.

f.   Towards Enhancing Professionalism in Teaching

That enhancing professionalism in teaching, whereby the profession is guided by the ethos, standards and ethics of the profession itself, be promoted as a long-term goal for enhancing teachers' capacity for managing changes and their identity as teachers.

_____

References

Afamasaga, G.T. (1999) 'Quality in Education', Paper presented at the World Bank ACER Conference, Fiji, November, 1999.

Beeby, C.E. (1979) Assessment of Indonesian Education – A Guide in Planning. Wellington:NZCER
Benson, C. et al. (1993) "Sio Atu" – A Preview of Tonga Teachers' College, IOE, USP.

Collingwood, I (1991). Multiclass Teaching in Primary Schools, Apia: UNESCO.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000): Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: a review of state policy evidence. Education Policy Analysis Archives. Vol 8(1) January 2000.

Delors, J. et al. (1996). Learning: The Treasure Within. Paris: UNESCO.

Dow, A. (1996). Report on the Kiribati Teachers' College Curriculum Review. KTC, Kiribati.

Education for All 2000 Pacific Regional Report (M. Chung). Apia, UNESCO.

Elley, W., Singh, G. and Lumelume, S. (1999). Reports on Impact Studies – Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu. {Also Fiji Report by W. Elley, G. Singh and H. Elder (2000) and Niue Report by G. Singh and S. Prakash, (1999)}. IOE, USP.

Fiji Islands Education Commission/Panel Report: Learning Together: Directions for education in the Fiji Islands (2000), MOE, Fiji.

IOE/UNESCO Chair in Teacher Education and Culture: Modules by K.H. Thaman, A.M. Taufe'ulungaki, U.Nabobo, A.M. Tupuola and K.F. Sanga. IOE, USP.

IOE Report on the Teacher Training College Principals' Consultation, 1998, IOE, USP.

IOE, BELS (Phase III) Files, USP.

Jenkins, D. and Singh, G. (1996): Improving Rural Education – Report of action research on Koro. SOH, USP.

Kataonga, A. (2000). The Tongan Schools and Institutional Strengthening Project: reflections from inside. Paper presented at RUPE Symposium, University of Auckland, November, 2000.

Khamis, M. (2000). The Beginning Teacher, in Steve Dinham and Catherine Scott (eds) – Teaching in Context. Victoria: ACER.

Pacific Pre-school Council Conference Report, 1995.UNICEF and University Extension, USP.

Ramsey, G. (2000). Quality Matters: Report of the Review of Teacher Education, NSW Department of Education, Australia.

Singh, G. (1993). Tarawa Teachers' College – Review of Training Programmes. IOE, USP.

Singh, G. (1997). Conditions for Teaching and Learning in Pacific Primary Schools. Directions Vol. 19 (2) 67-86.

Singh, G. and Booth, E. (1998). Final Review, BEMTUP. Lautoka Teachers' College Component. BEMTUP, Suva.

Singh, G. and Prakash, S. (2000). 'A Study of Teachers' Life Histories and Perceptions' in Fiji Education

Commission Report, Section 25.3 (p 407 – 418).

Standards Council of the Teaching Profession (1996). Professional Standards for Teachers. Department of Education, Victoria, Australia.

Tavola, H (2000): Review of Policies, Practice, Programmes, Recent Research and Literature in Basic and Non-formal Education in Pacific Forum Island countries. Forum Secretariat/USP Solutions.

Thaman, K.H. (2000). Pacific Cultures in the Teacher Education Curriculum Project - Report. Directions Vol. 22(1), 3-18.

UNESCO World Education Report, 1998. Paris.

USP 2000 Calendar and Statistics;

Annual Reports and Statistics from Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.