

Pacific Pride

Issue 12

The Newsletter of the PRIDE Project

May 2008

In this Issue:

From the PRIDE Team Leader	1
State and National Coordinators workshop	2
New publications launched	2
Subproject update	3
Rethinking Pacific Education Symposium	3
Tuvalu Study Visit to Tonga & Fiji	3
Update on Cook Islands subproject	4
Pacific education news	4
Impact of low Pacific ICT access	4

From the PRIDE Team Leader: Vision and ownership challenges

Many exciting things have happened since the last newsletter in February and are covered elsewhere in this newsletter: the launch of two books in the PRIDE Pacific Education Series; the State/National Project Coordinator's (S/NPC) workshop in Nadi in mid-April; and the receipt of 77 subproject proposals in April.

Another exciting development is the launch of the PRIDE-S/NPC mailing list on 20th May. In addition, the current review of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (or FBEAP) has significant implications for the PRIDE Project, most important of which is whether a PRIDE II will eventuate post-2009.

In a significant meeting of Pacific educator leaders in 2001 at the University of the South Pacific, the lack of ownership of education and an absence of a clearly articulated vision for education at the national and regional levels were identified as two key issues plaguing education systems in the region.

In this issue, I would like to reflect on the impact the PRIDE Project has made/is making to address these two concerns. It is my firm belief that the PRIDE Project has given countries and the region an opportunity to develop both regional and national visions for education as well as to take ownership and control of their education systems.

Let me start with the development of a regional vision for education. The groundbreaking document that contains this Pacific vision is the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) which was developed by Ministers for Education of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), with the PRIDE Project as the main vehicle for its implementation.

With the vision of developing basic education to 'engender the broader life skills that lead to social cohesion and provide the foundations for vocational callings, higher education and life

long learning', the Ministers acknowledged that there should be a balance between education to meet 'the new demands of the global economy' and education for 'the enhancement of their own distinctive Pacific values, morals, social, political, economic and cultural heritages, and reflect the Pacific's unique geographical context'. Inherent in this vision is the spiritual values of Pacific communities.

The Education Ministers' definition of basic education is all encompassing and inclusive – it covers all education provision and includes early childhood/preschool, elementary, primary, secondary and TVET and cuts across the formal and non formal sectors.

Because of the mandate the Project carries of enhancing the capacity of Pacific education agencies to effectively plan and deliver quality basic education through formal and non-formal means, many of the fifteen PRIDE countries have developed, with PRIDE assistance, education strategic plans containing individual national visions.

These education strategic plans carry the national vision for education for each of PRIDE's fifteen countries. These countries know exactly which direction they would like their education systems to take. Pacific Ministries of Education now have ownership of the planning process. They have taken control of the processes of strategic planning and implementation. In fact, a total of 18 education plans, 14 national and four state education plans (from the Federated States of Micronesia), have been developed, 13 with PRIDE assistance. The previous lack of both a regional and national vision for education is no longer an issue in the Pacific.

The strong sense of ownership of the Project by the Ministers for Education of the region and direct involvement of Ministries of Education in the implementation of the PRIDE Project is evident at meetings of

the Forum Education Ministers of Education and the Project Steering Committee which is made up of Heads of the education sector.

An important question to ask is how much control do Pacific people really have of their education systems (a) when the bulk of national/ministry funding is externally driven, (b) when Ministries of Education are still dependent on donor funding to implement their key priorities, (c) when external 'consultants' rather than local or regional ones are the norm rather than the exception, (d) when they have to operate within local realities but have to be cognisant of regional and international developments at the same time, particularly the global market economy, and (e) when we are still caught up in colonial and neo-colonial structures and processes?

Whatever the answers might be, the fact remains that, through PRIDE, Ministers for Education and their Ministries have developed a strong sense of ownership and control of their education planning processes. PRIDE has provided an enabling and facilitative environment, ironically through donor funding, for countries to seriously engage in re-thinking their philosophies, values, structures and processes.

The priorities reflected in the PRIDE-funded portion of education strategic plan implementation through more than 140 subprojects are indicative of a mindset shift that clearly signals that countries are now thinking and moving outside of the box. I will discuss this further in the next issue. ■

Priscilla Puamau, PhD
Project Team Leader

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



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



Editor: Libby Cass
Layout: Marlie Rota

ISSN#: 1813-0216
Tel: (679) 323.2783
Fax: (679) 323.1532

Pride National and State Project Coordinators' Workshop

The PRIDE Project held its 5th National and State Project Coordinators' (S/NPC) Workshop in Nadi, Fiji from 14th to 18th April. Fourteen NPCs and four State Project Coordinators from the Federated States of Micronesia attended the one week capacity-building workshop. Also in attendance were the PRIDE Team, the workshop evaluator from the Institute of Education and a representative from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS).

The workshop was formally opened by Ms Gabriela Koehler-Raue, Head of Social Sector, European Commission's Delegation for the Pacific, who reaffirmed the EU's commitment to the Pacific. She emphasised that "The EU's regional education strategy for the Pacific will continue to include a strong education component".

Consistent with this year's workshop theme *Monitoring the success of implementation*, the overall objective of the workshop



Participants at 5th National and State Project Coordinators Workshop

was to review the implementation of the Project at the national level.

The workshop programme commenced with the Project team briefing the participants on the Work Programme for 2008, followed by respective S/NPCs making presentations on the implementation of their education strategic plans. Overall, the statistics showed that the gaps in education enrolment and achievement between girls and

boys are narrowing – which is consistent with global trends.

Dr Helen Tavola, Social Policy Adviser, PIFS, provided a presentation on the intended review of the Forum Education Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP), a significant document which sets out visions, goals and strategies for the future of education in the Pacific, with PRIDE being the main vehicle for its implementation.

In the sessions that followed, coordinators were briefed on the requirements to use proper project proposal templates and reminded about the use of the monitoring and evaluation reporting templates and acquittal processes. The session on the PRIDE Resource Centre also included training on the use of educational databases.

One-on-one discussions on the in-country subprojects were held and the Project team received a significant number of final subproject applications by the end of the workshop.

The workshop was closed by Dr Tavola and the participants returned to their countries with the challenge to monitor the implementation of their strategic education plans and some 140 subprojects. ■

**Pala Wari, Workshop Convenor
Education Advisor**

New Regional Publications Launched



Charge d'Affaires, European Commission, Mr Robert de Raeve and New Zealand Acting High Commissioner, Ms Caroline McDonald at the launch.

The Institute of Education launched two new titles in March—*Pacific Voices: teacher education on the move* and *The Basics of Learning: literacy and numeracy in the Pacific*. Both are outcomes of PRIDE Regional Workshops.

Pacific Voices: teacher education on the move is the third volume in the Institute of Education's Pacific Education Series and is edited by Dr Priscilla Puamau, PRIDE team leader. This book is an outcome of the fourth PRIDE Regional Workshop held at the National University of Samoa in late 2005. The book distils the essence of pres-

entations given at the workshop and publishes for the first time the new ideas generated by the 43 workshop participants from 15 Pacific Island countries.

"Teacher education in the Pacific is at a crossroads. How do pre-service and in-service teachers preparation institutions reconstitute or reconceptualise themselves in a rapidly changing, intensely globalising world? How do they plan their activities and programmes, taking cognisance of what is best international practice in curriculum, pedagogical approaches, assessment and education theory? And how do they do this and retain the best of local 'theories' and practice? In other words, how do they syncretise the best of the local or indigenous ways of thinking and doing things with the best of contemporary global practices in teaching and learning?" writes Dr Puamau.

The book contains ten chapters by workshop participants and three by education specialists. The chapters cover issues that relate to pre-

-service and in-service preparation of Pacific teachers; and global and indigenous perspectives on teacher education, media and youth culture, and educational reform. The book provides new ideas and strategies for the future of teacher education in the Pacific.

The Basics of Learning: literacy and numeracy in the Pacific is the fourth volume in the Institute of Education's Pacific Education Series. The book is co-edited by Dr Priscilla Puamau, PRIDE team leader, and Frances Pene, Institute of Education editor. This volume is an outcome of the fifth PRIDE Regional Workshop held at the Sia'atoutai Theological College in Nuku'alofa, Tonga in May 2006. The book contains the ideas that were discussed at the workshop and publishes for the first time new ideas generated by the 39 participants from 15 Pacific Island countries.

There are three parts to the book: the first contains chapters on literacy, the second has chapters on numeracy with the third part integrating both aspects.

The notion of syncretising the best of the contemporary global with the best of the local is a central theme in the book. The global theoretical and conceptual perspectives to literacy and numeracy are provided, in addition to regional/local conceptual insights with a specific emphasis on indigenous ways of thinking about literacy and numeracy.

Two case studies are also included, one on applying indigenous mathematics concepts in the elementary syllabus in Papua New Guinea and the second on integrating the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Attention is also given to the importance of information literacy to learning.

Both publications have been developed with the generous support of the European Union and the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID). Copies of both books have been distributed widely throughout the Pacific region. The books are also available electronically on the PRIDE Project's website www.usp.ac.fj/pride. ■

**Libby Cass
Information Specialist**

Subproject Update

PPRIDE set aside over 12.5 million FJD, nearly 50% of its total five-year budget, to assist countries in implementing activities in their newly developed strategic plans that were hard to finance from their own recurrent budget or from donor funding. Each country was allocated an allotment and asked to prepare in-country subproject proposals for submission to PRIDE. The proposal had to show how it was linked to the country's strategic plan. This activity had a slow start, as countries had yet to finalise their strategic plans.

Last year, the PRIDE team developed a strategy that was intended to fast-track the country submissions and therefore ensure that at the end of PRIDE's life all subproject funding was fully utilised. The PSC meeting in Auckland in November 2007



The NPC of Palau, Emery Wenty (left) and Cook Islands NPC, Gail Townsend, discussing their draft proposals with PRIDE Project Manager, John Stunnenberg (middle)

endorsed a plan that gave deadlines to countries submitting proposals and gave the PRIDE management team the option to redistribute unused country allocations to those countries that had shown evidence that they could implement their proposals. PRIDE was also given an

extra year to continue its activities until the end of December 2009. During the NPC meeting in Nadi last month, many draft proposals were discussed with the NPCs during the one-on-one sessions and this culminated in PRIDE receiving 77 new subproject proposals by the end of April, with a combined value nearly exceeding the total amount still available. As of 15th May, 55 of the 77 were approved "in principle" and it is expected that the remaining 22 proposals will be presented to the Approval Committee by the middle of June 2008. The

Committee has noticed that the quality of proposals has improved significantly over the last six months.

In order to make sure that all subproject proposals will be implemented according to their intended time lines, the newly designed PRIDE Monitoring and Evaluation system will be rigidly applied in the next 12 months. This should provide up-to-date information about the Project's progress and its acquittals on a quarterly basis. If a subproject for some reason is not progressing at all, the NPCs are aware that a retraction of the proposal could be applied.

The PRIDE team is confident that by the end of 2009 all the in-country subproject allocations and the regional subproject allocations will be fully utilised. ■

John Stunnenberg
Project Manager

Tuvalu Education Officials visit Tonga & Fiji



Moses Halofaki (left) and Michael Noa (right) presenting a Tuvaluan mat to Mrs. Peaua Heimuli from the Tonga Ministry of Education.

Two officers from the Tuvalu Education Department completed a study tour to Tonga and Fiji to learn more about student assessment and technical vocational education and training. Mr Michael Noa, Senior Education Officer Assessment and Examination and the Principal of Motufoua Secondary School, Mr Moses Halofaki, visited Tonga and Fiji from 12th—21st May.

The study tour request was consistent with Tuvalu's Strategic Education Plan (2006-2010) which identify the need to develop a better students' assessment system and TVET strategies. The objectives of the tour were to learn lessons on how to improve the student assessment system and learn more about strategies required to implement TVET through curriculum reforms.

In Tonga the team observed

the curriculum and examination systems, held discussions with various Ministry of Education officers and visited the Tonga Institute of Higher Education. They also had the opportunity to discuss various issues with officers involved in the implementation of the Minimum Service Standard (MSS) project in Tonga.

The program in Fiji involved discussions with Ministry of Education officers and visits to Veiuto Primary School, Suva Vocational Centre, Fiji Institute of Technology (Marines and Fisheries) and SPBEA. Overall, the Form 7 initiative was fully explored in Tonga and the concept of TVET and vocational setting was researched extensively during the Fiji leg of the visit. ■

Michael Noa (Tuvalu MOE) & Pala Wari (Education Advisor)

The RPEIPP Symposium held from 12 – 14th May at the University of the South Pacific was three days of exciting, energising and rejuvenating *talanoa* of journeys and directions that the RPEIPP canoes had taken since its inception in 2000.

An acronym for Re-thinking Pacific Education Initiative by Pacific People for Pacific People, a project funded by NZAid, the RPEIPP symposium was co-convened by the Institute of Education and Victoria University of

Re-thinking Pacific Education Symposium



Participants at the Rethinking Pacific Education Symposium

Wellington's He Parekereke Institute for Research and Development in Maori and Pacific Education, with the aim to assess the impact of RPEIPP and to set new directions.

Ms Caroline McDonald, Acting New Zealand High Commissioner, opened both the symposium and the new community *fales* that were built with NZAid assistance.

Four prominent Pacific educators, pioneer navigators of the RPEIPP, were present during the symposium to witness personal and national journeys: Dr 'Ana Taufe'ulungaki of Tonga, Dr Kabini Sanga of VUW, Professor Konai Thaman of USP and Tili Afamasaga of Samoa.

Country participants from Tuvalu, Kiribati, Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Niue, Cook Islands, Samoa and the Commission of Education for Micronesia (CEM) attended the symposium. The School of Educa-

tion at USP, Victoria University of Wellington and the PRIDE Project were also represented at the symposium as was the entire Institute of Education team.

The activities and impacts of RPEIPP are manifold and varied, as revealed in the participants' stories of their entry into the re-thinking initiative and their journeys over the last few years.

It was evident from the symposium that RPEIPP had graduated from being an initiative to a 'movement', and that the first generation of navigators for RPEIPP were now 'grandparents' since newer generations of researchers and thinkers had joined the movement. As Seu'ula Fua of the IOE insists, 'RPEIPP is a philosophy, a way of being, a movement; the new Pacific paradigm'. ■

Sereana Tagivakatini
IOE

access puts Islanders at a disadvantage

Increasing the pace of computer literacy in grade schools throughout the Pacific is an essential and currently largely missing ingredient for Pacific Islanders to take advantage of the revolution in telecommunications sweeping the globe.

That is the view of Forum Secretariat telecommunications advisor John Budden, who has just completed a region-wide survey of telecommunications capabilities in Forum member islands.

Although Pacific Islands still face hurdles to getting high-speed Internet access and telephone service to small, remote populations, the reality is that only a small percentage of islanders even know how to use computers.

And increasingly computer literacy is essential for Pacific Islands to make the most of new telecommunications technology in education, health, economic development and job opportunities.

Budden, who is based at the Forum Secretariat in Fiji, and Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) information communication technology adviser Siasoi Sovaleni, said the issue in the Pacific is not just getting technology to people, but improving people's ability to make use of the new technology as it becomes available.

"It's not just about telecommunications companies," said Budden. "I'm concerned with the capability of people to use it (Internet and computers)." "There's no point to having a computer if you can't use it properly," said Sovaleni.

Budden has surveyed Forum island members ranging in population from just 1,200 to several million. What he has leads him to express the concern that as improved telecommunications technology becomes available, "do countries have the human capability to manage and use it?"

"In many Pacific Island countries, elementary school children have virtually no access to the Internet and little access to computers", Budden said. It is little different at the high school level.

The lack of computer awareness is a hurdle for educational advancement - and therefore national development.

"In rural villages in the Solomon Islands the government is now promoting a 'one-laptop-per-student' policy that is seeing children teaching their parents how to use computers", Budden said. "This is the type of computer literacy that can make a difference", he noted.

"If computers are not available in schools, students are missing out," he added. "It's essential for capacity building and for career paths of students to college and beyond." ■

Article from Pacific magazine



Students from Penryhn Island's Omoka High School in Rarotonga for work experience

The PRIDE Project has assisted 15 students from the most isolated northern group islands (Manihiki, Rakahanga, Penrhyn) in the Cook Islands to receive Careers Guidance, work experience and start some vocational training courses.

The Cook Islands Ministry of Education hosts an annual Careers Expo for senior secondary students. In the past, the isolation of the Northern Group Islands and the associated travel costs mean that students have not been able to attend.

One of the goals for the Ministry is to give all students equitable access to quality learning opportunities and that is where this subproject has been of benefit in achieving this goal.

The students travelled by boat and then plane to reach Rarotonga. For some, it was the first time they had left their home islands. In Rarotonga, the students received one on one careers counselling at the Ministry of Education and identified possible pathways for them to follow.

The students then all spent five days in different industries on work experience. These opportunities included being attached to the Meteorological Service, Nursing, Retail, Banking, Carving and Screen Printing.

The Ministry also negotiated with the Department of National Human Resources (DNHRD) for the students to undertake introductory courses at the Trades and Hospitality Schools which included cookery, hospitality, carpentry, plastering and electrical. Students will all be working towards gaining credits that will contribute to a qualification.

The Rarotonga experience will be followed up when the students return to their home islands through self reflection and extension work on identifying learning pathways.

In September, the students will all get back together again on one of the northern islands to share how they have used what they learnt in Rarotonga and how it can be contextualised for their own island. This September session will involve them in using these new skills as part of a Life Skills programme on their own islands.

The Ministry is extremely grateful to PRIDE for the opportunity that this subproject has provided. The subproject will allow the Ministry to identify the courses that work well for these students and what best suits their own islands. Planning and budget can then be put in place to continue to support these aspects.

Gail Townsend
National PRIDE Coordinator,
Cook Islands

Education news from the Pacific

PRIDE-supervised doctoral student **Mrs Ngozi Onwubolu**, also known as **Blessing**, presented the preliminary findings of her doctoral research at the School of Education **Talanga Seminar Series**, University of the South Pacific on Thursday 5th June.

Her thesis on the linkage between national development plans and education strategic plans using two case studies (**Nauru, Cook Islands**) is of critical importance as research in the area of educational planning in the region is limited.

Blessing began her PhD studies in June 2006 under the supervision of two PRIDE staff. She has completed her field studies in the two main countries, supplemented by additional interviews with key people from three other countries (**Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu**).

Preliminary results indicate the following: that there is no one method of educational planning in the Pacific; that there are no proper linkages of the education strategic plan to the national strategic development plan in all the countries under study; and that none of the countries' education strategic plans is properly linked with other sectors of the national economy.

Failure to offer girls the same educational opportunities as boys costs developing countries almost US\$100 billion each year in lost economic growth, according to

research by Plan, the children's NGO. **Paying the Price: The economic cost of failing to educate girls**, reveals that gender gaps in secondary school achievement in 65 developing and former Eastern Bloc countries cause them to miss out on annual growth of US \$92 billion. This is only slightly less than the total US \$103bn spent annually by the industrialised nations on overseas development aid. Countries in South Asia and West Africa have the worst record on educating girls to secondary level. India alone misses out on potential economic growth worth around US\$33bn each year. Twenty-six countries in sub-Saharan Africa fail to educate girls to the same standard as boys. By contrast, just two countries in Latin America, fail to do so.

Tom Miller, Plan chief executive officer, said: "Education is a real investment which reaps real rewards not just for the individual child but for society as a whole. Failure to educate girls to the same standard as their brothers has been rightly criticised as unjust and damaging to girls. Our analysis reveals for the first time the heavy economic cost of this failure to developing countries. It is a missed opportunity they can ill-afford." The startling figures are the result of an analysis of UN and World Bank statistics by Plan. A recent World Bank study found that failure to provide girls with secondary education reduces economic growth

by an average of 0.3 percentage points for every one per cent of girls out of school. Plan's findings are based on this research. Yemen has the largest gap between the boys who succeed at secondary school (30 percentage points).

The PRIDE Project held a successful **Project Management Committee (PMC)** meeting on 4 June 2008. The Project team tabled the 2007 audit report, 2007 annual report and 2008 progress report. The meeting was attended by **EU, NZAID, PIFS and USP** management.

Call for papers for Directions: Journal of Educational Studies

IOE is now accepting manuscripts for publication in IOE's academic journal, *Directions: Journal of Educational Studies*, a peer-reviewed journal. Papers on Pacific education that are conceptual, research-based and/or practice-based can be accepted. For more information contact IOE directions@usp.ac.fj.

Dates to remember
05th July PRIDE Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting.
08th to 12th September, 2008
9th PRIDE Regional Workshop
Pacific Knowledge Societies: "Creating and sustaining equitable access to quality resources and developing information literacy"