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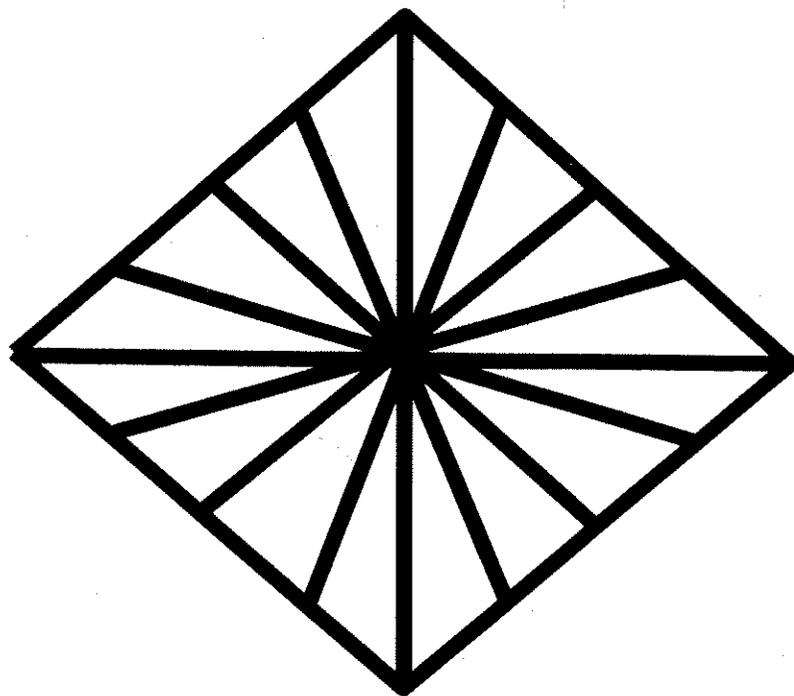
STRATEGIC PLANNING SEMINAR REPORT

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**Cook Islands**  
**Education**  
*for the 21st Century*

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**PRIORITIES & NEEDS**



Rarotonga, Cook Islands ♦ March 1997

## **Acknowledgements**

The University would like to acknowledge with gratitude the support and assistance of the Cook Islands Government in facilitating the successful staging of the seminar. Particular mention is made of the hard work by the national Planning Committee in the organisation and smooth running of the seminar. The contributions by the authors of the various papers, the panellists as well as all seminar participants, are gratefully acknowledged.

The support of the New Zealand Government in funding the Cook Islands seminar is also acknowledged with appreciation.

## Preamble

Education, by its very nature, is about change. It is therefore crucial that USP is not simply just a spectator, but an active participant in the process of change. It would be a serious error of judgement to assume that the institution will be shielded from regional and global changes that are taking place in the tertiary education sector generally. Member countries of the University will need to ensure that their priorities, values, assumptions, organisational structures, current and future technology, and quality controls can contribute to a successful future for USP as well as to their own national education structures.

That there are no roads maps to the future presents member governments and USP with a unique opportunity to map out their own. To chart a course that will achieve our collective purpose and is financially responsible, we must first not only understand ourselves, but also the likely trends in the external environment in which universities are expected to operate. And as USP nears the beginning of the 21st century and its fourth decade of service to the region, it is opportune to pose the question of whether its course offerings, research and consultancy activities are still responding effectively and efficiently to the real needs of its member states.

While another regional "Future Directions" conference similar to that held in Suva in 1983, was possible, the University was of the view that it would be inadequate for the purpose, given the changes in its clients' base. A minimum requirement for such a conference would be participation by large numbers of government departments, statutory bodies and private concerns usually interested in the services of the University. Clearly, this was not feasible because of resource and time constraints. As well, the University wished to ensure that its strategic planning took account of the training services offered by national tertiary training institutions, and their medium term development plans, in each country.

For these reasons, the decision was taken by the Ministers of Education to hold, over a period of 12 months, a series of national seminars in education in each of the University's twelve member states, as part of the process to develop a USP Corporate Plan. The format adopted for the seminars was designed to facilitate maximum local participation in the preparation of papers, the delivery of these papers, their discussion and analyses, and finally acceptance of decisions concerning their priorities in the education sector. The outcome of these discussions and deliberations for the Cook Islands, the second in the series of seminars, is recorded in the following pages. It should be emphasised that the recommendations and proposals represent the collective wishes and aspirations of the local community.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Cook Islands seminar was held at the Pukapuka Hostel over a three-day period from 5-7 March 1997. Its main purposes were for the Cook Islands community to advise USP of their requirements for future tertiary training, and for all sections of the community to be more involved in the process of identification, formulation and determination, particularly of educational policy at the national level.

A total of five papers (see Appendices) were presented representing the views and aspirations of the public sector, NGOs, the private sector, parents and students, and the aid community. At the conclusion of each paper presentation, members of the general public were invited to comment on any aspects of the paper or any other matter they felt was relevant to the discussion (see Attachment A for seminar programme). A Panel, comprising 12 local representatives (names presented in Attachment B) were then asked to discuss and analyse the paper, take into account any comments made during the public forum session which they deemed useful, and to prioritise the needs of that section of the community as they saw them. In both the public forum and panel sessions, it was not a requirement to speak in English. Participants were welcomed to communicate in their own language and this opportunity was used by some people.

The final session of the seminar was used to bring together the various priorities of the sectors involved in a consensus "list of priorities" that represents the national interest.

This report, then, reflects what the people, Government, and education authorities see ahead for their national education system, and for their University, USP.

# ***Summary Record of Seminar Proceedings***

Wednesday 5 March 1997

## ***OPENING***

1. The seminar was officially opened at 9.00 am by Hon. Papamama Pokino, Associate Minister of Education of Cook Islands. In his opening address, the Minister informed the meeting that the University is seeking guidance from Cook Islands on the country's ideas and priorities in the education sector. The seminar was therefore a timely exercise given changes currently experienced by Cook Islands, and the central role education plays in raising living standards of the local populace. The Minister then referred to Sir Geoffrey Henry's inaugural speech as Chancellor of USP in 1992, when he called for the University to be constantly aware and informed of member countries' educational priorities and requirements. The full text of the Minister's speech is reproduced in Appendix 1.

2. In quoting from the International Commission on Education report funded by UNESCO titled, "*Learning, the Treasure Within*", Hon. Pokino suggested that the Commission's recommendations and its vision of education into the 21st century would be a sound foundation on which to model future educational developments in Cook Islands. He cautioned, however, that national and regional systems must strive to unite the values of social integration with respect for individual development, if education is to be of relevance to society's needs. Only in this way will communities be able to cope and survive in modern society. The Minister then touched on the principles and directions advanced by the Commission as guidelines for educational development, as well as their views on the functions of universities.

3. In commenting on some of the problems faced by Cook Islands education at the present time, the Minister highlighted the need for qualified and experienced teachers at all levels to be induced to remain in the profession. He pointed to proper recognition of their work and

appropriate remuneration as two areas where immediate action should be directed. The Minister further argued that education should not be regarded as the sole responsibility of the teaching profession, rather, it should be viewed as a partnership between government, voluntary organisations, private sector, and families. In other words, the focus should not be on how many classrooms, but rather, on a “learning society”.

4. The role of new technologies in the future development of education was emphasised, as was the importance of distance education, adult education, and in-service teacher training as key components in efforts to strengthen and make education more relevant. The Minister concluded his address by observing that education is a community asset which cannot be regulated by market forces. Ultimately, it was for society to determine what type and calibre of education it wants.

5. The Minister then declared the seminar open.

6. The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Minister for agreeing to open the seminar at very short notice and took the opportunity to acknowledge the continuing support of the University by the Cook Islands Government. He said that the themes advanced by UNESCO were all relevant to future developments in education, and should be a challenge to discussions during the course of the seminar. Mr Solofa suggested that while the call for participation at the global level by the Commission is welcome, there was an urgent need to first define the position of education in the local context and factors that may have a direct bearing on the successful implementation of these themes. In brief, it was desirable to first understand ourselves and our environment before we can begin to chart a path to a successful future for education generally.

7. The Vice-Chancellor then restated the twin purposes of the seminar: for member countries to inform the USP of their needs and requirements; and for all sections of the community to be more involved in the process of identification, formulation and determination, particularly of educational policy at the national level. In highlighting the role of universities generally and USP in particular, the Vice-Chancellor noted two points which he said were fundamental to the role of the present day university. Firstly, the principle of “academic freedom”. Viewed in a very narrow sense, this is the classical notion that universities have a mission in the

interest of human-kind and, therefore, the freedom to explore and expand the frontier of knowledge in any field whatsoever. The classical universities of the old world did just this, and were able to do so because they were well-endowed and had good access to the wealth of royal houses and the Church. The average present-day university, however, does not have resource/financial independence and relies heavily on the support of the community to sustain it. Thus the notion of accountability has also become an important principle in determining the role a university should play.

8. In the case of USP, the Vice-Chancellor said that the University was almost fully dependent on its member countries for funding. It was, therefore, necessary for the university to consult widely in its member countries to ensure that its strategic planning responded with good accountability to the needs of each country. He added that by holding this seminar at the national level, the University hoped to generate greater awareness within Cook Islands (not just in government but the general public as well) about their ownership of USP and the importance of their involvement in its future plans, but also about the importance of public participation in advising the National Policy on Education.

9. The meeting noted that the last future directions conference for USP was held in 1983 in a regional forum in Suva. The implementation of some of the decisions taken by governments at that conference, including the phasing out of the Diploma in Education, and sub-degree programmes on-campus had led to some countries to now wonder whether they had done the right thing. He expressed the hope that this seminar, with its in-country/national perspective would be able to define more precisely the needs of Cook Islands. The Vice-Chancellor also noted issues raised in the public sector paper concerning USP and suggested that these should not detract the discussions of other more important issues over the next three days. The University will, however, undertake to provide clear answers to these issues before the end of the seminar.

10. In conclusion, the Vice-Chancellor noted that education is not a simple task, especially in the context of the USP. And although he saw the primary role of the University as that of providing high quality education to peoples of the region, he also acknowledged training as an integral component of the University's work programme. The Vice-Chancellor

then assured the seminar that while USP was willing and prepared to respond positively to the expressed needs of all its member countries, it is also the reality that it does not have all the answers to their problems. He stressed that an outcome of this seminar would be a report to inform the University of what it could do for Cook Islands, but equally importantly it could contribute to the further development of a responsive national policy on Education.

## **SESSION ONE**

### **PUBLIC SECTOR PAPER:**

**Honourable Papamama Pokino, Associate Minister of Education.**

11. In introducing the public sector paper, the Minister suggested that the UNESCO report should be viewed as a conceptual presentation that could provide the foundation on which Cook Islands can build its education system, relevant to its needs and requirements. The challenge, therefore, was for the seminar to come up with recommendations and ideas which would assist in constructing an education system that caters to the needs and aspirations of the population.

12. The needs of Cook Islands, according to the Minister, were as articulated by Sir Geoffrey Henry in his 1994 Graduation Address for USP. He listed these as:

- (a) Ocean Studies, including aquaculture, coral reef ecology, oceanography, fisheries and deep sea research.
- (b) Tourism and hotel management.
- (c) Small business entrepreneurship.
- (e) Rim country languages.
- (f) Public sector management.
- (g) Ecology, conservation and sustainable development.
- (h) Cultural development.
- (i) Information technology in its myriad forms.
- (j) Finance.
- (k) Life skills.

13. In addition, the public sector paper advocated decentralisation of USP activities and the further strengthening and development of University centres. However, the paper also acknowledged that the move towards diversification and decentralisation will inevitably have financial implications. The issue of cost effectiveness of education at USP was raised, discussed and acknowledged. It was felt that other tertiary institutions offer better and more relevant services in certain areas than USP. On the matter of staff and student research, the Minister argued that there was very little being done by USP in this area for Cook Islands.

14. Finally, the paper called for financial reform of USP by posing the question: "Why cannot USP become self-sustaining?". For the Corporate Plan to be able to meet and address the needs of its member states, the paper argued that this will require a major departure from current practices and trends.

## **PUBLIC FORUM DISCUSSION**

15. The Chairman welcomed the eleven panel members and invited them to briefly introduce themselves and the organisations they represented. The panellists were drawn from public and private sectors, Cook Islands Association of NGOs (CIANGO), and private citizens.

16. The first issue raised was in the form of a question directed at the USP: "Whether its courses were updated and reviewed continuously". The Vice Chancellor responded that USP recruits external advisers on a regular basis to undertake such tasks. Moreover, USP also draws on Commonwealth experience and to a lesser extent on North American and European expertise. Extension education was a self-learning process with extension courses usually reviewed every three years depending on the availability of funds and resources.

17. A view was expressed by one of the panel members that he was not in agreement with some of the issues raised in the Hon. Minister's paper for various reasons. First, it was unrealistic to expect USP, a relatively young institution to become a centre of excellence overnight. He quoted the case of universities elsewhere that have taken centuries to achieve this goal. Second, the needs of the outer islands can only be effectively addressed in-country by Cook Islanders themselves. He claimed that Government placed too much emphasis on economic development at the expense of other sectors. In addition, USP cannot have specialist skills in all areas, rather it was desirable to focus on a few specific areas it can excel in and not attempt to be a Jack-of-all-trades.

18. While the Ministry of Education considered excellence as a legitimate consideration by USP, the question that needed to be asked was how best USP could serve Cook Islands' needs? The Panel member said University Extension needed to be developed so students can carry out

entire Diploma or Degree programmes by distance education. This is because on-campus studies cater only to the needs of a few students (35 in the case of Cook Islands). It was pointed out that while the language of the rim counties may be important to study, it was doubtful whether the actual numbers would justify offering a programme in this area. There was therefore a need to determine the necessity for such a programme.

19. Another contribution from the floor suggested that USP should pay more attention to the provision of on-shore study programmes, since more people, especially from the non-government sector, stand to benefit from these courses. To achieve this, the Chairman drew attention to the Minister's proposal to strengthen the capacity of University Centres. This proposal was strongly supported with a suggestion that University Extension offers more courses for upgrading of skills such as computing and wordprocessing. It was also pointed out that such courses should not only address the requirements of government workers but also the needs of the community at large. One area that can be utilised to cater to this demand was the use of modern technology such as satellites for teaching purposes. The teaching of languages, especially Cook Island Maori, was highlighted as one area that was being neglected, and should receive urgent attention and commitment. A proposal was put forward for possible cooperation between certain agencies such as University Centres, USP's Pacific Languages Unit, and perhaps the University of Auckland which now offers Cook Island Maori by the distance mode, to examine the feasibility of this proposal.

20. The need for human resources planning was acknowledged as very important, as was the issue of adequate financial resources to fund the implementation of much needed initiatives in the education sector.

21. Another question asked was the need for the forum to identify USP's comparative advantages. Is it location, composition, ownership or distance learning? It was pointed out by the Ministry of Education representative that USP programmes were relevant to the island countries and cited as an example agriculture courses offered by the School of Agriculture at the Alafua campus. The standards of these courses, he claimed, were comparable to others offered outside the region. One programme that has made a significant contribution to, and received high

praise from the local community, was the USP Secondary Teachers training programme.

22. It was acknowledged that while the Hon. Minister's paper has some good ideas it was based on outside experiences and theories. The speaker cautioned that Cook Islands should carefully consider and analyse the situations internally before looking outside for answers, as the world is changing. The contributions that USP made over the years through extension and on-campus studies were acknowledged. For the future, Cook Islands needs to come to terms with what it needs first, and then make suitable recommendations. It was important for the Cook Islands to identify its own problems first without unnecessary external interventions.

23. The question of international recognition was an important consideration in some quarters and appeared to justify the choice of institutions other than USP, for the provision of specialist skills not available through University extension. The Director of University Centre elaborated on the University's entry requirements and the recognition it receives through cross-crediting of USP courses, for instance, towards a first degree in New Zealand or Australia.

24. On the question of what USP can do, distant education was identified as one of USP's strengths. It was proposed that the use of technology was a viable proposal, perhaps in language training, and utilising the PEACESAT station located at the Teachers College. It was pointed out, however, that one of the weaknesses in the delivery of such services lies in Government not providing the necessary incentives. This has led to a serious crisis with highly qualified teachers leaving, and the problem of replacement being encountered. While the Retreat exercise had been useful in getting views across to the Ministry of Education, it was claimed that no action had eventuated. While the meeting welcomed the tough message conveyed in the Hon. Minister's paper, it was equally important for Government to take immediate steps to rectify some of the shortcomings existing in the system at present.

25. There was general agreement that one of the many issues raised in the paper relates to cost implications and the perceived level of financial contributions to USP. Perhaps there were other avenues available to Cook Islands that can be utilised to address its higher level manpower needs and

demands. While regionalism, globalisation, and standardisation are all worthwhile goals, all have political connotations. What is of more immediate concern to Cook Islands, for example, is the 75% of pearl farmers in Manihiki who cannot read and write, and how they can be helped.

26. A view was expressed that it was unproductive to draw a distinction between education and training where education equates with academic endeavours and training with vocational skills. As an observation, the Vice Chancellor responded that it would be preferable to leave the issue open, citing the experience of USP where it undertakes both tasks. He went on to say that continuing education was being provided through the university extension centres with the local community having a say in what courses to offer. He suggested that for the Pacific countries it was important to appreciate the difference, with education being a formal process, in a very narrow sense, and training in the Pacific being regarded by certain international organisations, as "quick fixes". The environment we operate in is such that educational opportunities are very limited.

## **PANEL DISCUSSION**

27. Since the public forum session generated a lot of discussions with panel members actively participating as well, the Chairman invited panel members to submit written comments on what they perceive as the pertinent points arising out of the session. The following is a summary of the views expressed by panel members regarding the priorities in education as perceived by the public sector, with inputs from the general public and the panel:

- (a) tourism and hotel management;**
- (b) rim country languages;**
- (c) ecology, conservation and sustainable development;**
- (d) small business entrepreneurship;**
- (e) public sector management;**
- (f) cultural development; and**
- (g) information technology.**

28. Other areas identified by the panel but not highlighted in the public sector paper include: adequate funding for education; curriculum development; and appropriate programmes to address the needs of 85% of students who do not progress beyond secondary education. Further, it was agreed to highlight the contribution of teachers to the development of Cook Islands education, and for their services not to be underrated but recognised and given suitable resources. There was also concern raised at the number of skilled teachers leaving the service. Opportunities for teachers to upgrade their skills was highly recommended including exchange programmes with teaching institutions elsewhere.

29. As far as USP's role was concerned, it should promote an active continuing education programme to cope with current changes, so that parents and others can cope with some of these changes. Some of the courses that could be offered include skills in using modern technologies such as computers. Given that teachers of Maori language are not qualified to teach the language in schools, it was suggested that USP run courses in teaching Maori language for teachers and others who are interested. Courses should be at Certificate/Diploma level and the Pacific Languages Unit be asked to investigate the possibility of utilising Cook Islands language courses offered by Auckland University's Centre for Pacific Studies through the distance mode. Strengthening of Cook Islands Maori through teaching history and culture was important.

30. There was also general agreement among the panelists that distance education be utilised to provide educational opportunities for people in the outer islands. The reimbursement of fees to students who were successful in extension studies should be considered by the employers including Government. Recognition of the contributions of rural economies to overall national development was acknowledged.

## **SESSION TWO**

### **PRIVATE SECTOR PAPER: Ewan Smith**

31. The private sector paper took the position that if relevant educational strategies are to be identified, the first step would involve taking a critical look at current needs and how they are being met by education providers. Ewan Smith strongly argued that for education to be relevant to local needs, there must be an associated change in attitudes of all concerned. If changes are to be effected in the education system, he predicted that these would be forced on the system from outside. The full text of Mr Smith's paper is given in Appendix 2.

32. In his introductory remarks, Mr Smith pointed out that 85% of Cook Islands school leavers do not have the basic skills and knowledge relevant to their aptitude and interests, or to economic opportunities available locally. The present school system is geared towards addressing the needs of only 15% of the student population at the expense of the majority. He attributed some of the current malaise in education to the lack of strong leadership, and a clear vision of education within management. As a result, many of the students leaving at the secondary level were disinterested and had no desire for further education. There was also the need to include in the local school curriculum subjects such as craft and agricultural technology. A comprehensive international language programme was also promoted as desirable, given its relevance to the tourism industry and in dealings with trading partners.

33. On the issue of private schools, the paper strongly supported the idea that these be regarded as fully fledged education providers in the same way as state schools. The paper then moved on to identify some of the problems and needs of education as perceived by the private sector. These included the lack of proper infrastructure, the policy of national equity in education failing to deliver the desired outcomes, and the urgent need to examine distance education methods given the geographical situation of the Cook Islands. The role of technology in any future educational development was discussed and promoted.

34. The issue of lack of qualified teachers generated a lot of comments. The paper argued that the central concern was the availability of qualified teachers to teach in classrooms. This situation, however, is not helped by the fact that for years teaching staff have not been properly remunerated. As a result, teachers have either moved to other countries where the rewards are more attractive, or have taken on jobs outside the teaching profession. The paper then summarised the major outcomes of the recent Ministry of Finance and Economic Development retreat as:

- \* Education standards must be regionally competitive and qualifications portable.
- \* Curriculum must be expanded and directed at key areas of economic activity (i.e. tourism, agriculture, marine resources, culture and finance) and life skills.
- \* Development of accredited private education providers must be promoted and assisted through invitation to compete with national education. Bulk funded/trustee management of state schools to be developed where appropriate and achievable.
- \* The present internal inspection system to be replaced with an external Education Review Office responsible for auditing education providers to maintain accreditation and funding.

35. The paper concluded by asking what role USP can play in the proposed new education structure being advocated for Cook Islands.

36. The Chairman thanked Mr Smith for his presentation before inviting comments from the floor.

## **PUBLIC FORUM SESSION**

37. In response to some of the issues raised in the private sector paper, it was clarified that the overall policy of the Education Department is to eventually reduce the number of expatriate teachers employed in the service. However, where there was an urgent need, some arrangement was needed so expatriate teachers can be hired. It was pointed out that this

policy also has the support of NZODA. On the claim that the education system appears to be addressing the needs of only 15% of the student population, the seminar was informed that this trend was tied to the New Zealand system (Cook Islands uses the same system) where a 50% pushout rate exists.

38. The comment was made that the issues being discussed were similar to those receiving attention at the global level. The need to give due recognition to the teaching profession and attractive remuneration for teachers were highlighted. There was also strong support for adequate resources to be channelled into education to fund developments in the sector. A call was also made for USP to be much more involved in consultancy work which is of relevance to the development of member countries. On *Polynesia Way* it was confirmed that Government has already embarked on a programme aimed at implementing some of the report's recommendations. There was also a suggestion for the local curriculum to incorporate a mixture of portable New Zealand courses with local courses, especially in business studies, marine resources, and agriculture.

39. A lively discussion then ensued, centred around available resources for education and the bidding system currently in place for the allocation of government funds between competing demands. It was the unanimous view of the meeting that the present allocation of 10% of the national budget for education was low for a developing country like Cook Islands.

## **PANEL DISCUSSION**

40. In opening the discussion on the private sector paper, the Chairman directed the panel to focus on the issues raised in the paper as well as pertinent comments emanating from the public forum session in framing their final recommendations. There was a general consensus that the paper reinforced most of the issues that are of concern to Cook Islands in the development of the education system and it presented a clear vision of where education in the country is lacking and the path it should take to make it more relevant and sustainable.

41. In Cook Islands, it was claimed that the first area to suffer from any education budget cut was the primary level. This does not, however, correspond to the widely accepted view that the returns from education are greatest at the primary level. There was also growing concern for relevant programmes directed at disabled members of society. In this connection, USP could help through programmes aimed at raising awareness in the community of the needs of this special group.

42. One of the central issues raised in the paper relates to the roles of the private and public sectors as providers of education. Each has a pivotal role to play. Cooperation between the two parties, however, is essential if education is to progress beyond its current state and address the real needs and aspirations of most people. The urgency for immediate action was emphasised because of the claim that the present education system has failed to respond positively and effectively in meeting the requirements and aspirations of the community. There was, therefore, concern amongst the panelists regarding the need for the recommendations of the seminar to be actioned as quickly as possible and not suffer the same fate as other reports in the past. The establishment of a committee to assist in this task was recommended.

43. After further detailed discussion the Panel identified the following areas as requiring urgent attention, as perceived by the private sector:

- (a) Restructure and reform the existing education system.**
- (b) More effective management of education department.**
- (c) Lack of relevancy of education outputs.**
- (d) More appropriate curriculum (e.g. craft and agricultural technology to be included) and key areas of economic activity (tourism, agriculture, marine resources, culture, finance, and life skills) to be targeted.**
- (e) Inadequate resources.**
- (f) Need for change in attitudes towards education.**
- (g) Educational standards be regionally competitive and qualifications portable.**
- (h) Balanced development between Rarotonga and the outer islands.**

Thursday 6 March 1997

## **SESSION THREE**

### **NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION PRESENTATION: Mrs Vereara Maeva, President, CIANGO**

44. In her opening remarks, Mrs Maeva thanked the Government for providing the opportunity to NGOs to participate in the seminar. She noted that her paper was the product of consultations with the majority of NGOs in Cook Islands. The issues raised in the paper, she said, could therefore be regarded as the collective "voice of the people". Mrs Maeva then gave a brief background on the development of CIANGO, before outlining its aims and objectives. A copy of the NGOs' presentation is provided as Appendix 3.

45. The NGOs' paper welcomed the increasing recognition accorded to the organisation by Government and said their suggestions could help establish positive and effective directions towards achieving quality and productive services in the education system. The aims and objectives of NGOs were described and a brief summary of their work noted. The paper then provided these policy guidelines for NGOs, which were considered essential if Government and NGOs are to establish better working relations:

- (a) Creation of the right environment for NGOs to operate in. This environment should generally promote voluntary work, recognition of organisations, consultation and partnership.
- (b) Developing appropriate frameworks and mechanisms to facilitate and establish better working relationships between government and NGOs.
- (c) Supporting NGOs through provision of grants and contracts, plus other means of financial assistance.

- (d) Avoiding duplication and unnecessary costs by consulting with NGOs before setting up new government organisations that may duplicate work already undertaken by existing NGOs.

46. In order for NGOs to fulfil their policy guidelines, the paper presented a list of cultural, social, economic and political development structures which it considered important in facilitating the work of NGOs. Next, it presented a list of mechanisms which had the potential to affect these structures, highlighting information as the most powerful of these mechanisms. Focusing on the Education System and Management as the key factors to all human development, the NGOs paper highlighted areas of concern within the education system. Mrs Maeva then submitted that people were the most important resource, an investment for the country but more so for Government. In the case of Cook Islands, the paper claimed that the education system had not been functioning properly, because of: lack of finance and inadequate facilities, equipment and materials. Other problems that were of immediate concern include:

#### **Older teachers**

- \* Long serving teachers need to be re-trained either in Rarotonga or New Zealand educational training institutions.
- \* Salaries of these teachers to be upgraded based on quality and work output.
- \* Need to recognise experienced teachers for long service.

#### **Other areas**

- \* Ministry of Education to undertake a study and evaluation of the status and quality of teachers in the work force.
- \* Regular staff inspection once every six months to encourage and provide incentives to improve performance.
- \* New graduates to undergo training for Teachers Training Certificate.

- (i) The old Scholarship Policy to be reviewed or a new policy be developed based on the current situation;
- (ii) All development sectors should be represented on the Scholarship Committee; and
- (iii) The proposed HRD sector be responsible for placement of graduates in areas of needs, in accordance with the Scholarship Study Awards Policy.

49. Given the current financial situation in Cook Islands, Mrs Maeva challenged every Cook Islander to strive to be independent of Government funding. She urged all to adopt a self-help attitude rather than depending on Government for support. Only in this way would the country achieve real sustainable development and a better quality of life. The NGOs' paper then proposed measures for consideration, including the following:

- (a) All families (except less privileged) be responsible for at least half the cost of their children's education, and special provisions be made for the less privileged families;
- (b) An alternative financial source - a 'Revolving Fund'- be established by Government or other funding agencies, from which parents and students can borrow money on conditions and contracts that, if the child does well, he/she will not be required to pay the money back. If he/she fails, pay the money back, with special interest rate charge on the amount borrowed;
- (c) All development sectors (except NGOs), be responsible for contributing at least half the cost of any person from their organisation as a recipient of any education award;
- (d) Any future education and training programme conducted locally be developed as a cost-sharing partnership programme, where the participants are charged a small fee for refreshments etc. or provide their own; and

- (e) Money collected from the above, if any, could be used to pay for any certificate awards if required.

50. The presenter then congratulated the USP on its efforts in meeting some of the education needs of the member countries. In setting future directions for the USP, Mrs Maeva reminded the forum of the commonalities, similarities, and differences in the needs of USP's member countries. Where the needs are common, actions are taken accordingly and where there are differences the question of resources has to be taken into consideration. She said that the USP can refer back to the countries for reconsideration when resources are unavailable, or for countries to offer the programmes themselves.

51. In conclusion, she reiterated the importance of working in partnership with Government and challenged all with this quotation: *People without a vision will perish because they have no hope in Life.* The Chairman thanked Mrs Maeva for her stimulating and thought-provoking presentation before inviting comments from the floor.

## **PUBLIC FORUM DISCUSSION**

52. Most of the contributions in this forum welcomed and commended the NGOs paper, for containing relevant ideas and serving as a reminder to all to act now rather than later. The forum also recognised the important role that NGOs play, especially in outer islands. It was pointed out that this assistance was provided through their own initiative, by way of training programmes, without seeking financial assistance from Government.

53. While the proposal for retraining long serving teachers was a worthwhile idea, the Ministry of Education confirmed that they already have an on-going in-service training programme for their teachers. It was pointed out that since some of these older teachers had very low level of attainment (eg. Grade 8/Form 1) before taking up teaching, it was difficult at times to change their ideas and attitudes. However, their willingness to upgrade their skills was welcomed. There was one reservation from the floor regarding the NGOs' proposal for privileged families to subsidise the education of the less privileged. The argument was that through the

current tax system, the so-called privileged pay between 30-40% of their salaries in tax. The proposal that they pay more for the education of their children was therefore not justified, especially with education being regarded as a fundamental right of every citizen.

54. The Ministry of Education representative suggested that the forum should really focus on what Cook Islands wants USP to do, and as such he disagreed with the NGOs presentation. As he saw it, two issues needed to be brought to the attention of USP. First, the University Centre should be expanded so it can host computer training, for example, and second, USP's Continuing Education programme, being an education for life programme, should aim to meet some of the unmet training demands of Cook Islands. The Chairperson again reminded the forum that the seminar was a national seminar with the seminar inputs being used in drafting the Human Resource Development Plan for Cook Islands, due in May 1997. The University Centre Director took the opportunity to provide clarification concerning some of the Centre's work, such as the admission of mature age students with no formal qualifications but with years of experience. He cautioned the forum about modern technology and keeping up with trends. He said it was a question of having the appropriate technology and making full use of it.

55. On the matter of retaining and attracting quality people, it was observed that the key issue was the value we place on the teaching profession. A view was expressed that the main constraints and problems in education can be traced to the lack of human resources. Qualified teachers were leaving the profession and young graduates were being loaded with additional responsibilities in addition to their teaching overloads.

## **PANEL DISCUSSION**

56. The Chairman opened the panel discussion by inviting comments from members. The first contribution restated a question asked in the 1960's, "Education for What? At the time, the answer was, "Education for Export". In today's society, it was the collective responsibility of all to provide a better lifestyle for the children and generations to follow. The role of Education is, therefore, to enhance the capacity of people to do

things for themselves. The role of the NGOs in this process was acknowledged as important, given their stated objectives and aims as identified in the paper. It was also the case that NGOs assumed greater responsibility through non-formal education, and in the provision of quality teaching. It was also pointed out that NGOs are run by very skilled people who have a lot to offer society.

57. Another view was that NGOs can contribute positively to the development of teachers. This was because most teachers belong to an NGO and those who have the opportunity to participate in overseas workshops have benefited from this exposure. It was noted that many NGOs are managed by former teachers. The forum was warned that there was no room for complacency. While there has been great strides made in education over the past years, there was an urgent need to push and instil some of the virtues identified in the NGOs' paper, such as reliability and honesty.

58. The panel's attention was drawn to two important issues for discussion. First, the lack of information about USP generally and University Centre in particular, and second, on NGO activities. She suggested that USP take on board the following as a contribution to public education:

- (a) The USP Media Unit tape a programme about USP and its activities and negotiate with TV Cook Islands, for instance, about screening it at no cost.
- (b) The recording of this seminar can be turned into programmes, and USP be asked to provide a copy.
- (c) Use Cook Islands students (especially those studying Communications and Development) now on campus to contribute through radio or TV programmes.
- (d) The USP Centre to be more proactive and undertake more promotion of its activities and explore other avenues for financial assistance to support its programmes locally.

59. In discussing NGO activities, she pointed out that NGOs can undertake some of the continuing education courses without waiting for USP. She suggested that NGOs can utilise other facilities readily available in Cook Islands. In response, the President of CIANGO admitted that they do conduct most courses except the computer course and the floral arrangement course. One of the problems they have encountered was mainly attitude problems, in that people will not come forward to register unless some reputable body such as USP conducts the courses. As deliverers of education, NGOs can complement some of the activities in which Government is involved. Facilities and equipment owned by the Ministry of Education should be made more readily available for community use. The representative of the Ministry of Education informed the seminar that this was already happening. After further deliberations, the Panel identified the following priority areas as requiring urgent attention as perceived by the NGOs:

- (a) Expand and strengthen in-country continuing education programmes offered by USP.**
- (b) Re-training of long serving teachers.**
- (c) Lack of available information about USP programmes and courses.**
- (d) Need to improve the performance and quality of teachers generally.**

## **SESSION FOUR**

### **PARENTS PRESENTATION: Vaine Wichman**

60. The parents' paper was presented by Vaine Wichman. In introducing the paper, she highlighted the need to clearly define what is meant by education. Accordingly, she defined education in its broadest and most dynamic sense. That is, education is a life-long process that attunes the individual to constant changes that are taking place in society. She went on to observe that educational systems operating in most of the Pacific Island nations are geared towards white collar jobs. In the case of Cook Islands, there was an urgent need for the work force to be attuned to the goals of competitiveness, efficiency, and effective work practice. Change in attitudes was also promoted as one of the keys in coping with current changes. The legacy of colonialism in fostering and perpetuating a dependency mentality on the people was highlighted as was the need to re-programme the education system to focus more on the needs of the majority of the populace. The full text of the paper is in Appendix 4.

61. The paper then discussed the issue of what type of education parents want for their children. It argued that the formative years (0-5 years) of the child's life are not only important but critical to the full development of the child's potential. Family network support in caring for the child, in the case of working parents, was a feature of local society although there are also child care centres which could be utilised by working parents. Encouraging a child to love learning, the paper stressed, should be one of the key considerations for education at the primary level. Issues relating to fairness, equality, and the highest standards were all essential elements in the child's development from early childhood through to the primary level and should be actively encouraged and promoted. While recognising the importance of local needs, Mrs Wichman also argued for education that would allow people to compete internationally and to integrate successfully into the global economy.

62. The paper also focused on major areas of needs for education and training for Cook Islands in the medium term. It cited the appalling state of disrepair and the quality of primary and secondary education in the northern and southern groups as an examples of the disparity in service between the centre (Rarotonga) and the outer islands. Limited economies

of scale and high maintenance costs, however, have made it very difficult to achieve parity in development between the islands. The need to realign the present education system was perceived as one of the top priorities. As a way forward, Mrs Wichman proposed a structure which was deemed desirable in meeting the educational needs of society. The proposed model recommended a less pyramidal structure at the secondary and tertiary levels thus allowing more opportunities for progression to these levels. The issue of teenage pregnancy also received attention in the paper. There was agreement that every effort should be made to address this problem especially at the national level.

63. The role of distance education in meeting the needs of the outer islands was emphasised by Mrs Wichman. She noted the availability of distance education courses offered by various universities including USP that could be effectively utilised to address the needs of outer islands. The use of radio, television, and satellite merit serious consideration as means of reaching the people in the outer islands. On the issue of education finance, the paper called for a greater allocation of the national budget to be channelled to education. In making this recommendation, the paper also made the point that more money does not necessarily equate with better quality and standards of delivery in education. The paper also recommended that the policy of reallocation of the national budget based on approved outputs should be extended to include providers of tertiary/vocational education. The paper then noted that the days of parents influencing what their children should grow up to be had long disappeared. The situation now prevailing in Cook Islands dictates that change will inevitably permeates through all levels of society, including the work place. Decentralisation, public sector reduction, and growth in the private sector are distinct possibilities in the future for Cook Islands. There was, therefore a need for programmes that will prepare the young population to cope with these likely changes.

64. In concluding her presentation, Mrs Wichman identified the following problem areas and priorities as requiring urgent attention in the education sector as perceived by parents:

- (a) Realign the education system to enable it to meet the expectations and needs of society.

- (b) The ideals of national, regional, and international competitiveness be understood and embraced by local population.
- (c) Equal access to primary education.
- (d) Widen the provision of human resource development to the population.

65. The paper also identified three areas where USP could focus its activities in the future. These include: courses aimed at supporting the mainstay sector of the economy (e.g. tourism, agriculture, marine resources, off-shore financial services, business development, and management); support for improving the provision of primary education in-country; and realigning USP's service delivery both on-campus and through extension studies. In concluding her presentation, Mrs Wichman offered her vision of education in the Cook Island as: *"Access by all Cook Islanders to standards of education that are regionally competitive and portable and that enhance our culture and environment and our place in the global village."*

66. The Chairman thanked the presenter before inviting comments from the general public.

## **PUBLIC FORUM DISCUSSION**

67. In the discussion that followed, there was general acceptance that the paper raised issues that were important to framing an education system relevant to the needs of the community. The issue of teenage pregnancy was discussed and the seminar was informed of government's policy on this issue. The role of NGOs in counselling young parents was explained and the need for programmes on how to be a parent was highly recommended. The seminar was also informed that today's parents should play a more proactive role in the education of their children. However, it was noted that some parents expect the education system to cater to their children's needs.

68. The call for reforming the education system was supported by the general public. Given the willingness shown by the private sector, there was a feeling that this should serve to encourage all concerned to work towards changing the system. Assistance from other foreign companies should also be actively encouraged and promoted.

69. The Chairman thanked the general public for their contribution before inviting the panel members to discuss the parents' paper and make appropriate recommendations.

## **PANEL DISCUSSION**

70. The Panel, after a wide ranging discussion, agreed that the following accurately represent the priorities of parents regarding education in the Cook Islands at all levels:

- (a) Formal education to include the first five years of a child's education in addition to years 6-11.**
- (b) More focus on community education programmes.**
- (c) Expand education opportunities at all levels to populace.**
- (d) Identification of innovative means and modes of delivery for primary education.**
- (e) Development of distance education for outer islands.**
- (f) Adequate resources be made available to education sector.**
- (g) Programmes in parenting skills.**
- (h) Disparity issue to be addressed.**
- (i) Competitiveness.**
- (j) Equal access to primary education.**
- (k) Widening of the provision of human resource development to population.**

**Friday 7 March 1997**

## **SESSION FIVE**

### **AID DONOR PRESENTATION:**

**Mr Auton Ojala, Deputy New Zealand High Commissioner.**

71. The Chairman welcomed the New Zealand Deputy High Commissioner and thanked him for agreeing to present his country's policy on education generally. Mr Ojala gave an overview of NZODA policy on Education and Training and how it relates to Cook Islands education. At the outset he pointed out that expenditure on scholarships, training awards, in-country and third country education made up the single biggest contribution (around one-third) of NZODA programme. The broad rationale for assistance to education and training is grounded in foreign policy and in New Zealand's wish to establish cooperative bilateral and regional relationships. The specific rationale is based on the ODA Guiding Principle: "To contribute to sustainable economic and social progress and justice in ODA partner countries through the transfer of knowledge and skills". The text of Mr Ojala's presentation is reproduced as Appendix 5.

72. The Deputy High Commissioner then highlighted the NZODA education and training objectives which include:

- (a) The provision of education and training to meet defined human resource development needs in developing countries;
- (b) The development among people in the recipient country (especially those who are or will be community leaders), of familiarity with a favourable disposition towards New Zealand;
- (c) Ensuring NZODA to education is cost effective;
- (d) The provision of equitable access to educational opportunities (with 50:50 male/female ratio by 1998);

- (e) The demonstration of New Zealand's education and technical expertise.

73. Mr Ojala welcomed the plan to identify a Human Resources Development Strategy currently being undertaken by the Cook Islands Public Service Commission. He noted that this would help NZODA to direct their assistance to the priority areas identified by Cook Islands and further help them achieve their educational objectives. He went on to provide illustrations of NZODA's contribution to Cook Islands' education. Out of a total of 41 current scholarship awards, 48% are females and 52% males. The total NZODA contribution to Cook Islands in 1996/97, amounts to NZ\$1.4 million distributed under the following headings:

- (i) Tertiary scholarships in NZ and Fiji - \$600,000 to sponsor 31 students at an average cost of \$20,000 per student.
- (ii) Secondary Teachers to Cook Islands under Teaching Support programme. \$750,000 for 16 teachers at roughly \$45,000/NZ teacher.
- (iii) Other short-term awards, plus project type activities which involve the use of local counterparts.

74. In concluding his presentation, Mr Ojala cited this quote from the book of Hosea: *My people are destroyed by lack of knowledge*. He noted the wealth of available information that needs to be translated into knowledge. He reaffirmed that education is about developing people and NZODA is about developing nations, but nations are ultimately made up of people.

## **PUBLIC AND PANEL DISCUSSION**

75. This session generated a lot of lively discussion with various issues discussed. While some of the issues and clarifications raised were directly related to the aid-donor presentation, a lot more were connected to other concerns discussed earlier in the course of the seminar. It was noted that although the majority of speakers appreciated and thanked the NZODA for their assistance to the Cook Islands, the forum was reminded of the

desirability of Cook Islands being able to stand on its own two feet and to move away from "beggar mentality" and dependency. Cook Islands must develop its own resources and must know what it has and be willing to manage it well. Most of the speakers highlighted the need for a change in attitudes at all levels and getting back to very basic values of love, generosity, and honesty.

76. Another problem that received a lot of attention concerns the lack of information/communication feedback from the Ministry of Education on issues which are of interest to parents, especially about their children's education. The issue of being accurately informed was considered vital, and the Chairman took the opportunity to invite the Vice-Chancellor to provide some clarifications concerning the statement by the Hon. Minister of Education relating to the very high cost of government's contribution to USP. According to the Vice-Chancellor, Cook Islands' contribution to USP in 1997 amounts to \$361,430 with the tuition cost for one equivalent full-time Cook Islands student being \$6,024 thus refuting the claim made by the Hon. Minister. This unit cost per student at USP, according to the Vice Chancellor, was very low compared to universities in rim countries. After further inputs from the floor and panel members, the Chairman thanked Mr Ojala for his presentation.

## **CONCLUDING SESSION**

### **CONSENSUS LIST OF NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PRIORITY NEEDS OF THE COOK ISLANDS**

77. The Chair advised the panel members that the main objective of the session was for the panel, as a group, to consider the various education priorities raised in papers from the public and private sectors, the NGOs and parents, as well as inputs from the general public, and then agree on a consensus list that represents the national interest. Individual panellists were then invited to present brief summaries of the main areas that in their judgement required attention in the education sector. The following is, therefore, a summary of the collective priorities and problems in the education sector as identified by each of the invited papers, in addition to views and comments made during the public discussion and panel forum:

- (1) Tourism and hotel management.**
- (2) Rim country languages.**
- (3) Ecology, conservation and sustainable development.**
- (4) Small business entrepreneurship.**
- (5) Public sector management.**
- (6) Ocean studies including aquaculture, oceanography, fisheries, coral reef ecology, and deep sea research.**
- (7) Cultural development.**
- (8) Information technology.**
- (9) Curriculum development (eg arts and craft).**
- (10) Focus on needs of 85% of students who do not progress beyond secondary level.**
- (11) Reform of the existing education system.**
- (12) Education output to be more relevant.**
- (13) Adequate resources to support education developments.**
- (14) Change in attitude towards education.**
- (15) Educational standards to be competitive and qualifications portable.**
- (16) Balanced development between centre (Rarotonga) and outer islands - disparity issue.**
- (17) Expansion and strengthening of continuing education programmes.**
- (18) Distance education, especially for outer islands.**

- (19) More focus on community education.**
- (20) Expansion of access to education.**
- (21) Effective delivery of primary education.**
- (22) Parenting skills programme.**
- (23) Widen provision of human resource development to population.**
- (24) Re-training of long serving teachers.**
- (25) Need to improve the performance and quality of teachers at all levels.**
- (26) Formal education to also include the first five years of the child's education.**

78. The seminar also identified the following areas for USP attention:

- (a) Strengthen, develop, and expand University Centres. Centres need to be proactive.
- (b) Distance education to be further developed. Also need for full programmes of study to be offered through extension.
- (c) Continuing education programmes relevant to local needs. In the case of Cook Islands these include arts and craft, screen printing, floral arrangement, women in development etc.
- (d) Language programme
- (e) Courses that support the mainstay sectors of Pacific economies: agriculture, marine resources, tourism etc.
- (f) Support for improving the provision of primary education in-country.
- (g) Realigning service delivery both on-campus and through the distance mode.

There was a strong feeling that the University needs to advertise its activities more, especially in-country, and its Centres in particular could do much more than at present.

79. In response to a request from the panel, the Chairman invited Ewan Smith to share his views on how the recommendations of the seminar could be translated into a format that would facilitate implementation without further delay. Mr Smith's proposed framework is presented below:

**Education Charter**

- Vision statement.
- Leadership - initiatives
- Promotion
- Constitutional guarantees (access, freedom, equity etc.).

**Statement of Goals**

- Targets

**Implementation**

- Bidding system.
- Accreditation.
- Quality.
- Parental awareness
- Salaries.
- Training.
- Incentives.

In considering the above framework, the panel also agreed to appoint the following people to a team to consider the matter further. The team to comprise: Ewan Smith (Chairman), Vereara Maeva, Carolyn Short, Gill Vai'imene, Peter Etches, Tina Browne, Fanaura Kingstone, and Liz Ponga.

**CLOSING**

80. In drawing the seminar to a close, the Chairman invited John Hermann to say a few words on behalf of the Planning Committee. Mr Hermann thanked the Chairman for the very capable manner in which he had steered discussions over the course of the seminar. He also expressed his thanks to all involved in the organisation and planning of the seminar. John then invited the Vice-Chancellor to address the meeting. The Vice-Chancellor thanked everyone who have been involved with the seminar

and observed that the seminar generated a lot of discussions and has resulted in a wealth of ideas being identified to assist in the future development of education in Cook Islands. He shared the concern expressed by others on the need to ensure that the recommendations of this forum were put into good use. In this regard, the formation of the E-Team he felt was a move in the right direction. The Vice-Chancellor concluded by acknowledging the contribution of the Minister of Education and the Department in facilitating the smooth running of the seminar.

81. At 12.30 p.m. the Chairman declared the seminar close.

## ATTACHMENT A

### **Cook Islands Strategic Planning Seminar in Education 5-7 March 1997 Pukapuka Hostel**

#### **PROGRAM**

#### **Wednesday March 5, 1997**

8.30am - 9.30am	-	Opening Hon. Papamama Pokino
9.30am - 10.00am	-	Morning Tea Break
10.00am - 11.00am	—	Public Forum Discussion
11.00am - 12.30pm	—	Panel Discussion
12.30pm - 1.30pm	—	Lunch ("provided")
1.30pm - 2.00pm	—	Private Sector Paper Mr Ewan Smith
2.00pm - 3.00pm	—	Public Discussion
3.00pm - 4.30pm	—	Panel Discussion

#### **Thursday March 6, 1997**

8.30 - 9.10am	—	NGO's Presentation Mrs V. Maeva
9.10am - 10.30am	—	Public Forum Discussion
10.30am - 12.00 noon	—	Panel Discussion
12.00 noon - 1.00pm	—	Lunch ("provided")

## ATTACHMENT A

1.00pm - 1.40pm	—	Parents/Students Presentation Mrs Vaine Wichman
3.00pm - 4.30pm	—	Panel Discussion
<b><u>Friday March 7, 1997</u></b>		
8.30am - 9.00am	—	Donors Presentation NZODA
9.00am - 10.00am	—	Public Forum
10.00am - 12.00 noon	—	Panel Discussion Wrap up Session
12.00 noon	—	Lunch (provided)

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**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS - COOK ISLANDS SEMINAR**  
**5-7 MARCH 1997**

- |     |                    |   |
|-----|--------------------|---|
| 1.  | Vereara Maeva      | President, Cook Islands<br>Association of NGOs<br>(CIANGO)          |
| 2.  | Jackie Wightman    | Secretary of Health Watch,<br>CIANGO                                |
| 3.  | Mata Tobia         | CIANGO  |
| 4.  | Ewan Smith         | Private Sector  |
| 5.  | John Hermann       | USP Centre Director   |
| 6.  | Harry Ivaiti       | Principal, Tereora College  |
| 7.  | Marcia Teterano    | Cook Islands News   |
| 8.  | Tai Manuela        | Private Sector  |
| 9.  | Toru Newbigging    | Training Development Officer,<br>Public Service Commission<br>(PSC) |
| 10. | Ken Mathewson      | Ministry of Education (MOE)   |
| 11. | Jim Strachan       | NZ Qualifications Authority<br>(NZQA)                               |
| 12. | Gelling Jack       | Principal, Avarua College   |
| 13. | Don Teau           | Titikaveka College  |
| 14. | Russell Thomas     | PSC   |
| 15. | Eseki Solofa       | Vice Chancellor, USP  |
| 16. | Betty Carpenter    | MOE   |
| 17. | Gill Vai'imene     | MOE   |
| 18. | Fabian Kairua      | MOE   |
| 19. | Peter Elias        | MOE   |
| 20. | Mereani Tangata    | MOE   |
| 21. | Bernice Manairangi | MOE   |
| 22. | Terepai Moetaua    | MOE   |
| 23. | Marjorie Crocombe  | Private Sector  |
| 24. | Ina Hermann        | MOE   |
| 25. | Vaine Wichman      | MFEM  |
| 26. | Tepoave Raitia     | Ministry of Culture   |
| 27. | Jacqui Evans       | MOE   |

## ATTACHMENT B

28.	Lionel Browne	MOE
29.	Eric Ponia	MOE
30.	Fanaura Kingstone	Coordinator, National Council of Women
31.	Bill Evaroa	Principal, Cook Island's Teacher's Training College
32.	Mark Brown	PSC
33.	Geoff Stoddart	Private Sector
34.	Liz Ponga	Marine Resources
35.	Auton Ojala	Deputy New Zealand High Commissioner
36.	Marcus Kopu	Island Hopper Vacations
37.	Maureen Goodwin	Te Uki Ou School
38.	Ruth Pokura	Internal Affairs
39.	Theresa Porea	Minister of Education's Office
40.	Niki Rattle	Takitumu Community
41.	Tingika Elikana	Police Department
42.	Dennis Tangirere	Culture Department
43.	Mona Hermann	Student, Waikato University
44.	Kathy Ben	MFEM
45.	Mum Koroa	Teacher's Training College (TTC)
46.	Anu Taripo	TTC
47.	Maara Kaukura	TTC
48.	Annie Charlie	TTC
49.	Elizabeth Kapi	TTC
50.	Eliza Roberts	TTC
51.	Matua Teariki	TTC
52.	Teremoana Vainu	TTC
53.	Navy Epati	PSC
54.	Tina Browne	Solicitor/Notary Public
55.	Tuivau Andrew	Transition
56.	Moetuma Nicholas	PSC
57.	Nouroa Short	PSC
58.	Joe Pukapuka	Hostel Proprietor
59.	Teanau Taripo	Retiree
60.	Tohoa Teitinga	PSC
61.	Carolyn Short	Private Sector
62.	Peter Etches	MOE

**OPENING PRESENTATION  
RAROTONGA STRATEGIC PLANNING SEMINAR  
BY  
HON PAPAMAMA POKINO, MP  
ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF EDUCATION  
5 MARCH, 1997**

We have gathered this week to assist the University of the South Pacific to draft a Corporate Plan. The university planners are seeking guidance from the member countries. They want our ideas and our priorities. This is a timely exercise and, given the qualifications and broad range of experience amongst us, we can expect a hearty feast of contributions.

Once our ideas have been joined with those of the other member nations into a Draft Plan, we will convene again to consider the whole document before it goes to final form. Thus, if you believe that the quality of our lives in the 21st century rests upon our level of education – and I do –, then this is not just a timely gathering but an important one.

In July, 1992, when Sir Geoffrey Henry was installed as Chancellor of the University, he called for just such a task as we have undertaken this week. He said:

"I may differ from my predecessors in that I yearn for far greater relevance to our past cultural and historic traditions, to the present needs and the future prosperity of all Pacific islanders. Even if we have already done it before, we [should again] confront private sector leaders, public service planners and educational administrators and ask again and again, 'What can we do for you?' "

Now, four years later, we have our chance. But, before I give you my own views, my particular concerns and hopes, I want to focus on more basic concepts.

With considerable expert assistance, I will offer a foundation on which we can erect the structure of our recommendations.

## APPENDIX 1

In 1993, UNESCO financed an International Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century. The Commissioners were distinguished educators from 15 nations, chaired by France's Jacques Delors. They had a well staffed Secretariat and adequate funds to call upon a dozens of other experts. Their report titled Learning, The Treasure Within was published last year.

In order to deal concisely with the learning process at all ages and in all societies, the Commission divided its subject into six lines of inquiry: culture; citizenship; social cohesion; work and employment, research and science. Imagine these down one side of a matrix. Then, across the top, spread the three functions of education: communications technologies; teachers and teaching; and financing and management.

That matrix gave them a structure. Then, they viewed all of its facets in three different ways. These were Outlooks, Principles, and Directions.

What is an "Outlook" in Education? Quite simply, it is not learning but the context of learning. Worldwide interdependence and globalization are now undeniable facts. These will increasingly create a schism between the "information-haves" and the "information-have-nots". The haves will find their way in the 21st century, but the have-nots will be at the mercy of events.

Since we live in an uncertain world, education must be diversified. Our local and regional systems must strive to combine the values of social integration with respect for individual development. Carried by global events beyond our control, we must steer towards greater mutual understanding through acceptance of spiritual and cultural differences.

"Outlook" is also, faith in the democratic process. An active sense of citizenship must begin at school. In a society inundated by information and media variety, democracy demands "the faculties of understanding and judgement".

If rapid change is to be the norm in the next century, then we --all of us-- must be able to make sense of it.

Lastly, "Outlook" in the Commission's view establishes a link between our educational and economic development policies. It is not a

## APPENDIX 1

complex matter. In their words, it is simply the "encouragement of initiative and team work...taking into account local resources, self-employment and the spirit of enterprise."

Next, the Commission moved on to "Principles". They begin with "the four pillars of education": I was so taken by the clarity of these that I'd like to explain each briefly in my own words:

learning to know is, of course, that of which much of formal schooling consists. As children and young adults, we are exposed to a small number of vital subjects. We are not acquiring much information. When schooling is at its best, we are learning how to learn.

learning to do is something to which I am sure this seminar will give much thought. It deals not only with useful occupational skills and career choices, but the competence to work with many situations and in teams. If university education is to be relevant, it must provide for these.

learning to live together is certainly an informal by-product of every person's school experience, but perhaps it should receive more formal attention at all levels. We can only hope for regional and international understanding by instilling respect for the ways of others.

learning to be means developing the individuals personality, judgement and sense of responsibility. In the Commission's view "education must not disregard any aspect of a person's potential: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities or communications skills".

Further to the concept of "Principles", the Commission focused on learning throughout a lifetime. They said:

"The traditional division of life into separate periods -- childhood and youth devoted to schooling, adulthood and working life, and retirement -- no longer corresponds to things as they are today and still less to the demands of the future. Today, no one can hope to amass during his or her youth an initial fund of knowledge which will serve for a lifetime. The swift changes

## APPENDIX 1

taking place in every society call for knowledge to be continuously updated..."

Adult education is, of course, an ever growing contribution of USP's Extension Centres. While we are concerned in this Seminar with education in a university and beyond, the success of every university depends to a great extent on the quality of its entry students. In other words, you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. We cannot demand more from USP's Corporate Plan than we are prepared to achieve in our own primary and secondary levels.

In its theme titled "Directions", the Commission found that the strengthening of traditional basic programmes of reading, writing and arithmetic remains a vital requirement for all countries".

To these basics, they added: "the ability to express oneself in a language that lends itself to dialogue and understanding and a receptivity to science and the world of science in anticipation of scientific and technological upheavals in the next century".

As for secondary levels, the Commission isolated just four key functions for any university. These are:

- to prepare students for research and teaching;
- to provide highly specialized training courses adapted to the needs of economic and social life;
- to be open to all, so as to cater for the many aspects of life long education in the widest sense; and
- to be centres of international cooperation.

The Commission viewed adult education as no less than "the key that gives access to the twenty-first century. It said:

"In its new guise, continuing education is seen going far beyond what is practiced such as upgrading, refresher training, retraining and conversion or promotion courses for adults. Instead, it should open up opportunities for many purposes -- offering them a second chance, satisfying their desire for knowledge and beauty

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or their desire to surpass themselves or making it possible to broaden and deepen strictly vocational forms of training, including practical training. In short, learning throughout life must take advantage of all the opportunities offered by society".

Lastly, the Commissioners focused on four "Directions". The first of these concerns purpose. They said:

"The purpose of education systems is to train people for citizenship, provide for the transmission of knowledge and culture from one generation to another and to develop people's talents. Education systems also have to provide the skills economies will need in the future".

After "purpose", the Commission offered three other "Directions":

- Teachers in search of new perspectives;
- Choices for education: the political factor; and
- International cooperation: educating the global village.

I will summarize these as briefly as possible before bridging from them to our immediate task.

Teachers: if we under-pay and under-rate our teacher's, we are kidding ourselves when we pretend to place importance on education. They must be recognized and they must be given suitable resources.

However, we cannot and should not rely solely on the teaching profession, rather a partnership between it and families, voluntary organisations and the commercial sector. The Commission speaks of a "learning society", not of so many classrooms.

Beyond the teaching-community partnership, exchanges of teachers between countries was strongly encouraged. Where this is done, it not only adds value to the courses in question, but creates "greater receptivity to other cultures and experiences".

The "Direction" that was most pertinent to this Seminar was essentially a political statement: "Choosing a type of education means choosing

a type of society".

They are speaking of the long term impact of whatever recommendations emerge from your deliberations this week. In fact, the Commission advocated exactly the sort of forum that we are attending. They endorsed the decentralization of decision-making just as the planners of USP's Corporate Plan have done by convening us and as we ourselves did in the educational workshop at the recent Retreat.

While calling for the widest possible participation in planning, educational directions, the Commission did reaffirm the role of political authority which, they said, "has the duty clearly to define options and ensure overall regulation, making the required adjustments. Education is a community asset which cannot be regulated by market forces alone".

Nor did the Commission shy away from new technologies. Hopefully, your deliberations, too, will consider the fullest use of Internet and other information and communications technologies.

In particular, the Commission recommended:

- the diversification and improvement of distance education through the use of the new technologies;
- greater use of those technologies in adult education and especially in the in-service training of teachers; and
- the dissemination of these technologies throughout society.

Finally, the Commission stressed internationalism, especially cooperation and exchanges within regional groupings. They urged that full 25% of all aid should be for education -- and not less than 6% of a nation's GDP!

Hand in glove with such funding should be new partnerships between international institutions dealing with education. They stressed the collection and comparison of data. How do we compare with others? Are we spending enough? What is our drop-out rate? Are we overlooking at innovations that are successful elsewhere?

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From these would emerge:

" a set of indicators revealing the most serious dysfunction of an education system such disparities in access, in efficiency of several parts of the system, the level of relevancy and the cost effectiveness of any given system versus other options for learning."

I have dwelt on the Learning, The Treasure Within because it is recent, it is excellent and it is pertinent to our purpose.

For me, the Commission's Report serves a role similar to that of an architect's rendition. It is a conceptual presentation, an attractive work of art that answers in a glance what sort of edifice might be built. If the client agrees with the theme, then it is time for draftsman's drawings and construction.

In my opinion, the University of the South Pacific falls far short of the UNESCO Commission's concept and, indeed, has a long way to go before it becomes an acceptable rendition of a regional educational centre.

Our University was founded on the vision of the Pacific Leaders and the vision of Sir Christopher Cox's Commission which completed what amounted to the first Corporate Plan in 1966, only two years before the first students had enrolled. That Commission demanded that our university attempt the highest quality in both teaching and student achievement. It was followed by two other foundational documents, the Morris and Alexander reports.

Lord Morris urged that instruction in the University be relevant. "It must take into account both the interests and aptitudes of the students of the region and, also, the circumstances and needs of the countries concerned..."

Sir Norman Alexander agreed. Thirty years ago, he made a statement that the corporate planners would do well to remember in 1997. He wrote "Special problems will require special measures".

With that, Sir Norman gave us licence to think freely and boldly. What are the special problems now and for the next 30 years and what

is required to meet them?

I'll quote again from Prime Minister Henry's 1992 Installation Address:

"We yearn for a University that is both distinguished and distinctive. I suggest that being distinctive is the path to becoming distinguished. But we ourselves need to choose such a path. We do so by defining our existing strengths, our natural assets and our purpose.

Certainly, one distinctive strength is found in the existing regional centres. I am sure that you will find amongst [the Pacific Leaders] enthusiasm for a build-up of all regional extension centres [into full campuses].

Would the diversity of widely separate campuses pose new problems, different costs and demand special treatment? Yes, but we are already on that course; why not embrace it?

The creation of such an institutional system ..only requires our determination and our commitment to be achieved. And, while it progresses, why not immediately network with the Universities of Papua New Guinea, Guam, Hawaii, to the French University of the South Pacific and even to those of Pacific Rim countries?

[The combination of] fully developed national campuses and such an international network -- and an Internet network -- would place us on the path to distinction".

One "special problem", to use Sir Norman's phrase, is that, while trying to serve many interests, USP excels in none. Let's be frank: USP has not achieved international recognition in any single course of study, let alone in the several that should have been possible since its founding.

In 1994 Graduation Address in Suva, Sir Geoffrey again urged decentralization, excellence and relevance. Besides the obvious values of focusing on ocean studies -- including aquaculture, coral reef ecology, oceanography, fisheries and deep sea research -- he offered a menu of relevant possibilities:

- "tourism and hotel management;
- rim country languages;
- ecology, conservation and sustainable development;
- small business entrepreneurship;
- public sector management;
- cultural development; and
- information technology in its myriad forms".

Should University of the South Pacific offer all of this and more -- or should it focus on a very few and find ways for regional students to get others elsewhere?

We in the Cook Islands are asked to contribute \$400,000 a year plus an additional \$600,000 of our proportionate share through bilateral aid awards -- all to support 35 students in residence and about 60 half-time extension students, roughly 70 student-equivalents. That amounts to over \$14,000 per year per student -- more than enough to attend Harvard or Cambridge.

Even as we are asked to participate in the Corporate Plan for USP's next decade, we have come to realize that our tertiary students can do better elsewhere. For a few examples: James Cook University does better in marine studies; Southland Polytechnic in Engineering; and Massey in Public Sector Management.

The Commission spoke of cost benefit analysis. USP loses on that count, too. We are proposing an alternative whereby Massey University instructors would come to Rarotonga and train 25 people for a Public Sector Diploma for \$120,000 -- just for \$4,800 each!

And, what of Pacific Studies or the languages of Oceania and the Pacific Rim countries? Would you go to the University of the South Pacific for these? Given the opportunity, you would go to Canada, New Zealand, Australia or Hawaii.

Let us ask how much research is conducted by either USP's faculty or students in the Member Countries. The answer is very little.

How relevant is the present curriculum to economic recovery and growth in which every member country will be active for decades to come? The answer is very little.

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The Commission urged an appreciation of the world of science and technology. Would you readily turn to USP or to the Extension Centres for that?

Remember the four key functions of universities?

- Will USP help the Cook Islands in research and teaching?
- Are there highly specialized courses aimed at solving the needs of, say, our Outer Islands economic life?
- Is USP in fact open to all when, for example, only resident faculty spouses and resident students are allowed to be employed in Fiji?
- Indeed, is USP especially "International" on the Laucala campus?

Remember the "four pillars of learning"?

- Does a USP student gain as broad or broader knowledge than he or she would gain elsewhere at comparable or less cost?
- Is a USP student able to return to the Cook Islands with occupational or career skills for our private sector?
- Is the Laucala campus a place of peace where our students learn to respect other cultures and be respected by them?
- Can we gain from either Laucala or our Extension Centre the fullest use of our individual potential: judgement, reasoning, aesthetics and communication skills, for example -- or would we go elsewhere for these?

I fear that, in my frankness, I am being brutal. Actually, I would prefer to call it "tough love".

Some think that the Cook Islands should simply drop its membership and use that \$1.0 million dollars per year to sample the rich offerings

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of other educational institutions, those that compete by virtue of quality, not a somewhat spurious claim to being "regional".

Last October, in Port Vila, the Minister for Education Ngereteina Puna called for a financial reform of our university. He asked, "Why cannot USP become self-sustaining?" and suggested a dozen ways by which it might consider doing so.

That was not just a financial question that he raised. It was, in fact, an inquiry into excellence. If the real goals of the Corporate Plan are excellence, relevance and true internationalism, then the capacity to become self-sustaining would be a foregone conclusion, not some terrible hurdle put in the administration's path by the Minister of Education from the Cook Islands.

Will an improved USP Corporate Plan be just a revised curriculum or will it truly meet the needs of a changing world?

Will the Corporate Plan deliberately and precisely suit the needs of the member nations?

To do so, the Minister for Education and I believe there will have to be a major break from current practices and trends. The planners will have to take these seminars seriously and act without reservation. They must take to heart Sir Norman's maxim: "Special problems require special measures".

I spoke of "tough love". We for one do not want to see the Cook Islands pull out of USP membership. We want the University of the South Pacific to earn our support. We want them to get their act together -- and we believe that they can.

To do so, they badly need your ideas and your priorities.

I hereby declare this Seminar on Strategic Planning in Education to be open. May God bless your efforts this week.

***Provocation is awkward in the beginning -  
but gets easier over time!***  
**- Edward de Bono**

## APPENDIX 2

In order to suggest appropriate future strategies for the USP in our community, we need first to take a critical look at present educational needs at all levels and how they are being met by existing education providers, including USP. I have been invited to express an opinion as a representative of the private sector and I extend my appreciation for the opportunity to do so. As well as representing business I should add that I have four small children at primary school and I serve on their PTA. So I have some appreciation of what is happening at the grass roots level of Cook Islands pre and primary school education.

Seven years ago I represented the private sector on a panel that prepared a report and recommended the future direction of our education system. Despite *Polynesian Way* being endorsed by government at the time, there is no evidence of implementation of as much a single recommendation in all the time that has elapsed since. Nor has anyone presented any alternative to the recommendations of the report.

I believe that our education bureaucracy is moribund and without leadership or vision. Any initiative to change the system is suffocated at inception. I think we now have to 'provoke' change because the attitude for change and reform in our education system is not present among those responsible for it.

Consider this: We are approaching the year 2000 and 85% of our secondary school leavers are entering the adult world with little or nothing to show for their education or, little education relevant to their aptitude, interests, or relevant to the economic opportunities that our country offers.

Many children are entering our education system as excited and motivated pre-schoolers and leaving secondary school disinterested and with little desire for ongoing learning. Our economic recovery will not go far unless we turn this around.

We have no music in our curriculum, no craft, no agricultural technology, and only limited art and sport.

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***Fact: we do not offer any comprehensive international language programme - yet the major portion of our tourist arrivals are from Europe***

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Historically, our schools have focussed on producing graduates for the public service. This has been implemented through a core academic curriculum at secondary schools with primary access to tertiary education through a bonded scholarship scheme that returned diplomates and graduates to positions within Government. Until recently, the private sector was regarded as an insecure employer by a public used to the often politically inspired reward of lifetime employment with the public service. There has been little offered in the way of on-going or adult education. Special needs - for either the gifted or retarded - have not been catered for.

Seventh form at Tereora College is for most, the apex of our present education system. Until recently the road ahead from there lay with the public service and tertiary education opportunities at the USP.

We are still lining children up in straight line behind desks in badly light and maintained classrooms, in tropical heat with inadequate resources and expecting them to be inspired in this learning environment. These are classrooms reminiscent of the 1960's and 70's. Would the Minister or education officials in any of our countries be prepared to work in their offices in those conditions? In the private sector one certainly would not expect good results from this environment.

*A mind once stretched by a new idea  
can never go back to its original  
dimension*

- Oliver W Holmes

We have a number of private schools educating a substantial number of children. However these education providers are still very much the poor relation of the education system. They receive little support when in fact they are playing an important role. They should be regarded as fully fledged education providers in the same manner as state schools. One of our new private schools at least was borne of parents frustration with the poor quality and direction of state education.

Like many South Pacific nations, some of our islands are far-flung outposts that challenge any administration in the logistics of providing infrastructure. Education is an area that suffers acutely from this. Seven years ago in *Polynesia Way* the state of education in the outer islands was described as 'unpardonable'. Nothing has happened since that report, so what could you describe it as today? There, a policy of national equity in education has failed in a major respect through a misguided attempt to apply uniform methods throughout the country rather than recognise the different geographical status and needs of the outer islands through the development of specialised distance education methods.

Herein lies an example of the opportunity technology offers through the development of educational television broadcasting to the outer islands as an important element of distance learning. A few modifications to our existing broadcasting and television equipment creates the ability to transmit educational television broadcasts from Rarotonga to the outer islands.

*In an age where some South Pacific  
countries are offering 24 hour,  
worldwide direct dial sex, our classrooms still  
have 1960's teaching technology*

Recent inquiries into the cost of satellite time indicates that off-peak rates between 6am and 11am are available at \$175 per hour. So the cost of satellite time for 4 hours of education per day, five days per week for a whole year would be around \$150,000.

Similarly, inter-islands satellite data links have existed for years with the capability of providing distant tutors 'on-line' to outer island students but this facility has not been utilised.

This capability exists right now but it requires a commitment to innovation to realise this opportunity. Like I said, its about an attitude for change.

Recently in a media release from the education ministry, it was reported that a Rarotonga College was to receive the services of a new expatriate teaching couple for this year. The major thrust of the story was that these would be the only outside teachers employed this year in line with the ministrys' programme to eliminate the need for expatriate teachers.

Yet in the same week at the school my children go to two classes had been without a teacher since the beginning of the year. 25% of the first term had elapsed without a dedicated teacher in front of these classes. What sort of management is this? What priorities are being followed here? It seems that the education ministry has priorities woefully out of step with the expectations of the public they are serving.

Its performance is challenged by a classic conflict whereby it is regulator and operator of schools. It provides education services, audits itself and reports to itself on its own failings.

Teaching staff have been underpaid for years and as a consequence the majority are now under qualified because the careers we offer in education are not competitive within the region. School premises are run down and dirty. Yet the ministry is pre-occupied with its programme of reducing the number of expatriate teachers. I cannot convince myself that our education ministry is capable of initiating its own rejuvenation. Pressure for reform will have to be imposed from outside.

*A uniform way of teaching and testing  
is patently unsatisfactory when  
everyone is so different*  
- Howard Gardner

Where does the USP fit in our national education structure?

As a provider of tertiary education to the community the curriculum is also heavily biased toward academic pursuits. Perhaps this is the proper role of an institution such as USP. Is it the case then that USP is catering for the same 15% of academic achievers that succeed at secondary school that we identified earlier, without offering anything to the rest of the community?

It appears to me as an outsider that most of the USP graduates in the Cook Islands are in the public sector and who received their tertiary education free. University graduates who pay for their education seem to choose universities in New Zealand and Australia. This begs the obvious question - are USP attainments up to scratch? Are they regionally competitive?

Human resource development in our country would be enhanced with the availability life long education programmes, skills enhancement, life skills, foreign languages, courses for employers, marketers etc. In the same way that the new technology needs to be harnessed for outer islands distance education, perhaps USP could employ the same techniques to deliver a broader range of educational opportunities to adults.

So this is a time for us to contemplate how we will educate our children in the coming years. Lets set out a vision for education in the Cook Islands for the year 2000.

Where modern technology takes the world to the lagoons edge in the northern group, where children can be inspired by their inclusion in the global village. Where we practice modern education methods that you can not only hear and read, but see and feel. Where art and craft, singing and music are as important as physics. And where many of our citizens become imbued with the notion of life-long education better to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing world around us.

*People are not lazy - they simply have  
impotent goals - that goals that do  
not inspire them*  
- Anthony Robbins

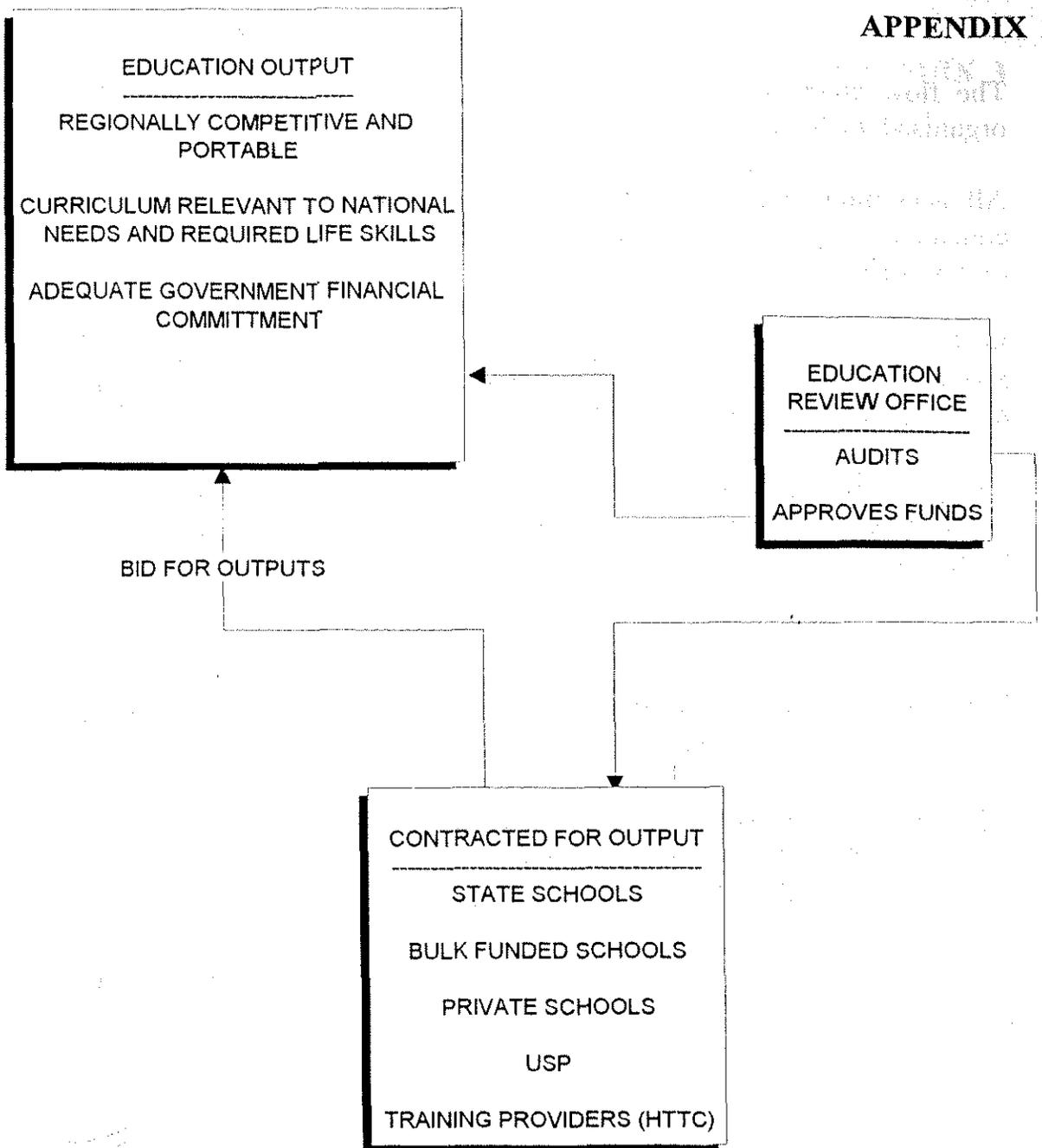
## APPENDIX 2

Recently, our Ministry of Finance and Economic Management hosted a retreat during which strategic national objectives were discussed and debated.

An important consensus emerged:

- Education standards must be regionally competitive and qualifications portable
- Curriculum must be expanded and targeted at the key areas of economic activity (i.e. tourism, agriculture, marine resources, culture and finance) and life skills
- Promote and assist the development of accredited private education providers through invitation to contest national education output. Develop bulk funded/trustee management of state schools where appropriate and achievable.
- Replace the present internal inspection system with an external Education Review Office responsible for auditing education providers to maintain accreditation and funding.

(Incidentally, to reinforce the point made earlier, retreat participants unanimously chose education as the nations #1 priority and urged a doubling of the present government financial commitment.)



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The flow chart shows how it has been suggested education can be organised in future.

All accredited education providers will be able to contest national education outputs and will be audited by an independent education review office.

In this way, public funds should be more effectively utilised, choice should expand, initiatives and innovation should become the motivators of change and development.

I suppose the question is, should the USP compete for its position in our new education structure along with any other potential tertiary institutions?

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Thank you for considering my paper. It is a lay persons view of some current education issues.

My apologies to any education professionals who may have taken offence to any statements I have made. They have been made in a spirit of total objectivity.

Ewan Smith  
Rarotonga  
4/2/97

**THE COOK ISLANDS NGO'S PERSPECTIVES  
FOR  
THE USP/CIG STRATEGIC PLANNING SEMINAR  
RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS - 5-7 MARCH 1997**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

While it is in the interest of those involved in this programme, to fulfil the aims and objectives to achieve the desired goal, this paper will discuss and propose views to illustrate ways and means that may assist in the process of promoting and enhancing the standard of services in the Cook Islands' situation. Therefore, the content therein, should not be regarded as conclusive, but means of setting goals for sustainability and other purposes.

In the outset, it is difficult to foresee what may be the best platform or processes that dictates beyond doubt that the mechanisms involved will have a positive effect on the individual or group that has common goals. Maybe, towards the end of the presentations or the whole programme, a clearer path will be instituted for the purpose that it was so intended.

**2. BACKGROUND**

The establishment of CIANGO, as the National Co-ordination and Liaison Unit for all NGOs in the Cook Islands, was motivated by the desire for a caring, loving, responsible and peaceful society. Having such strong motivation, CIANGO, has tried to establish and operate programmes of:

- Education
- Health
- Social Welfare
- Economic Improvement  
especially among the disadvantaged or less privileged groups in the community.

CIANGO is predominantly made up of both affiliated and non-affiliated groups such as:

- Women's Organisations
- Church Organisations
- Youth Organisations
- Sports Codes
- Uniformed Organisations
- Social/Entertainment Groups
- Business and Professional Groups
- Social Welfare Groups
- Men Non-violence Groups
- National/International affiliated groups and other interests and Environmental Awareness Groups

### **3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Naturally, CIANGO is subject to its Aims and Objectives:

- 3.1 To co-ordinate and bring together all existing NGOs in the Cook Islands, for the purpose of constructive and informative dialogue;
- 3.2 To establish a network for obtaining and disseminating information and resources to all NGOs in the country.
- 3.3 To identify and expose the unified efforts whereby, the Cook Islands may derive benefits through the opportunity that will exist for such organisations to come together on a regular basis and discuss issues/matters that will be of national interest;
- 3.4 To act as a national umbrella for all NGOs in the Cook Islands;
- 3.5 To liaise between the National Government, International Training Institutions and Funding Agencies on matters of importance to Members of CIANGO;
- 3.6 To co-ordinate, plan, organise and conduct training

persons;

- 3.7 To liaise on representations at National, Regional and International Meetings, Conferences, Seminars and Workshops;
- 3.8 To act and serve as the link vehicle of the national voice on issues that are related to Members of CIANGO, following consultation with Members.

#### 4. CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

Obviously and without doubt, NGOs in the Cook Islands have played a very major and important role in the development of the nation in promoting and enhancing sustainability in all aspects of development in the country. It is very heart-warming to know that Government and the society today, have recognised the contributions by NGOs, to the well-being or welfare of the Cook Islands population.

As a matter of necessity and convenience, NGOs are also searching for sustainable processes of socio-economic development to provide better social and economic changes and challenges for the most affected groups within the community.

Since Government has already adopted the modern thinking and methods in the National Development Planning process of our country, especially those related to our Modern Education and Management, perhaps, some suggestions from an NGO's perspective could help establish positive and effective directions into achieving quality and productive services in the Education System and other areas of development for sustainability and better quality life for all in the future.

How to achieve the above statement, rests within each individual by being so relaxed, critical, less involvement in domestic and/or community activities, negative attitudes towards neighbours, selfishness, and so stems to destroy the very element of growing and reaching out for the well-being and advancement of the total population.

Before moving on to a refined set of ways and means to enhance the purpose and Aims and Objectives of the programme, may be, I should invite you all to consider the following sets of Policy Guidelines for NGOs, that were developed by all the Pacific Islands NGOs, including the Cook Islands (CIANGO), in collaboration with the Commonwealth Foundation of London, as a means of setting direction towards achieving the desired goal of this programme.

### 5. POLICY GUIDELINES FOR NGOS

#### 5.1 CREATING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

In order to create an enabling environment for NGOs, the Government should promote Voluntarism generally, and acknowledge the validity of the role of NGOs in civil society.

Government should also have appropriate legislation and official procedures for the registration and public accountability of NGOs.

#### DEFINITION:

Legislation and official procedures established by Government should enable the formation and operation of organisations which possess the defining characteristics of NGOs

- Voluntary formation and an element of voluntary participation;
- Controlled and managed independently, but nonetheless operated within the laws of the society as a whole;
- Not for personal, private profit or gain of those who control and manage their affairs, and using earned revenues in pursuit of the Aims and Objectives of the organisation;
- Not self-serving; but aim to improve the circumstances and prospects of disadvantaged people and/or act on concerns and issues which are

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detrimental (damaging) to the well-being, circumstances or prospects of people or society as a whole.

### RECOGNITION

Legislation and official procedures established by Government in respect of NGOs should enable:

- NGOs to be independent, while operating within the law;  
NGOs to pursue a variety of activities, in the course of their work including:
  - service and project delivery and management;
  - mobilising human and other resources;
  - research and innovation
  - human resource development;
  - advocacy, campaigning and reform.
- NGOs to operate under legal structures which are appropriate to them, including:  
private trusts and foundations, not-for-profit limited liability companies, associations, co-operatives, friendly and provident societies;
- NGOs to be linked to parent bodies, provided these are NGOs themselves, and to form subsidiary (assisting) bodies in pursuit of their aims;
- NGOs to secure resources from a wide variety of sources in order to carry out their work, including private sector and grant giving agencies.

### CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Governments should at all times endeavour to work in partnership with NGOs. This should include open information provision and consultation on all matters affecting the work on interests of NGOs, including consulting with them before decisions are made or agreements entered into with other parties which may affect their work or interests; and co-operation on matters of mutual benefit, such as in seeking funds from international and inter-Governmental bodies. The

development of legislation and official procedures should also be done in consultation with NGOs.

### 5.2 FRAMEWORKS AND MECHANISMS

Government at all levels should have appropriate frameworks and mechanisms to facilitate communication and consultation with NGOs and to utilise their experience and expertise in the general policy-making process and in the planning and design of relevant Government programmes. The frameworks and mechanisms should maximise the use of available resources and ensure reciprocal transparency, while maintaining the freedom and ability of both parties to act independently. They may have any or all of the following features:

- A main focal point for Government/NGO relations, in order to facilitate contact between Government ministries and NGOs;
- Focal points/desk officers for relations in each ministry having areas of common interest with NGOs;
- Ensuring NGO representation on relevant Government working parties and committees established to advise on matters of common interest to NGOs;
- Organising consultative meetings with NGOs, and issuing relevant documents to them;
- Organising fora which bring Government and NGOs personnel together to develop strategies for strengthening Government/NGO understanding and partnership in general.

### 5.3 SUPPORT FOR NGOS

Grants and Contracts - In providing grants and contracts for NGOs, Government should:

- Adopt the Policy Guidelines for NGOs which apply to funders of all types;
- Recognise that NGOs can:

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provide value for money, since all their resources are devoted to the pursuit of their objectives although they should not be seen as a cheap option for service delivery;

pioneer and innovate with new ways of working and deal with needs and problems that Governments are unable to respond as effectively;

be efficient and effective programme managers because, they can often mobilise human and other financial resources;

- recognise that different funding terms and conditions should be applied to:

grants and activities designed and managed by NGOs;

contract fees paid to NGOs for services provided for or on behalf of Governments;

- ensure that when an NGO is contracted to deliver services:

such contract is within the capacity of the NGO and do not place a burden on the organisation which is greater than it is capable of absorbing;

such contract do not undermine the independence of the NGO, nor defeat its stated objectives and purposes.

Other ways of financially assisting NGOs - Government should also support the work of NGOs by:

- granting NGOs exemptions from or reductions in taxes and duties;
- facilitating foreign currency importation;
- providing tax relief for donations made to NGOs;

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- assisting or giving official support for the production of directories and handbooks which provide information about both Government and NGOs and their work;
- supporting and assisting initiatives which aim to improve the work and impact of NGOs, and the technical and managerial capacities and abilities of their staff, volunteers and members/beneficiaries.

### 5.4 GOVERNMENT-ESTABLISHED ORGANISATIONS

Governments may, from time to time establish national, regional/state or local organisations outside the mainstream state institutions to carry out certain functions. While these may have similarities with NGOs as defined in Guideline 1, neither Government nor the organisations themselves should present such organisations as true NGOs. Government should, before establishing such organisations or taking over existing NGOs to fulfil the desired purposes, consider, in consultation with relevant NGOs, if existing NGOs could carry out the necessary functions, or if the organisations could be established and operated as independent bodies fulfilling all the defining characteristics of true NGOs.

## 6. DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURES

In order to fulfil the motives of the Policy Guidelines for NGOs, as described above, perhaps we should also consider the following development structures according to position by which it embraces the concerned population and its inter-action.

- |                  |   |             |
|------------------|---|-------------|
| Cultural Struct. | - | People      |
|                  | - | Environment |
|                  | - | Tradition   |
|                  | - | Habits      |
| Social Structure | - | Recreation  |
|                  | - | Health      |
|                  | - | Education   |

- Population
- Ec. Structure
  - Trading
  - Finance
  - Production
  - Services
  - Employment
- Political Struct.
  - Tradition
  - Ad Hoc
  - Religion
  - Government
  - Private Institutions
  - NGOs/Institutions

These structures have positive impact on the population at all levels of the country, ie - Culturally, Socially, Economically and Politically. Careful and skilful consideration must be enhanced in the employment of these structures since they are the sound basis for sustainable development in any country.

What are the elements or mechanisms that may assist in the promotion and enhancement of sustainable development in all areas of human development in the Cook Islands?

A collection of systems, attributes, qualities, management skills etc, is put together for the benefit of this programme. This collection is one of the related attributes towards promotions and sustainability. But each one is not classified according to its employment and end result.

**7. MECHANISMS AFFECTING OUR DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURES**

- |                       |   |                |
|-----------------------|---|----------------|
| information (quality) | - | guidelines     |
| direction             | - | platform       |
| work-plan             | - | leadership     |
| commitments           | - | aggressiveness |
| consultation          | - | acceptance     |
| dedication            | - | willingness    |
| humility              | - | cohesiveness   |

communal spirit	-	enthusiasm
evaluation	-	participation
objectives/goals	-	situation
system	-	management
pathway	-	finance
organisation's structures	-	rewards
attitudes	-	motivation
research	-	bold
house-keeping	-	honesty
team-work	-	appreciation
co-ordination	-	understanding
forward thinking	-	unbiasedness
reporting	-	reciprocal

From the list of mechanisms above, the most powerful tool is 'information'. The information tool is the platform of which, directions can be effectively enhanced. The default of information is 'quality'. A poor quality information could lead to tremendous problems.

The concepts and definitions of these mechanisms are often overlooked or ignored and neglected. This situation must not be allowed, nor lightly treated. The cost of investment in it is far less than the cost of putting things right at the end of the programme.

**Quote:** "Prevention is better than cure".

The above listing is not only tailored for leadership quality. They are also embraced elements that an organisation may need for the effective achievement of its desired goal.

## 8. AREAS OF CONCERN

### Education System and Management

'People' are the most important resources and they are the best investment to the country, but more so to Government. For the past few years, our education machineries have not been functioning effectively, and the assumptions were: lack of

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finance, inadequate facilities/equipment, lack of material resources, etc, etc, and above all, the unhappy staff relationships (for personal and political reasons).

Although NGOs have no direct or formal involvement in the actual management of the Education system, they have not failed to notice with assumptions, some of the problem areas, which may have been overlooked or ignored and neglected. However, since education is the main digestive machinery for all human development needs, its capacity should be strengthened, facilities upgraded, old classrooms to be reconstructed, improved and properly equipped. Potential human resources to be toned up with the necessary skills and conditions, in order to accommodate and provide other human development needs, especially those of the future generations.

We are now drawing towards an era of modern technology and its wonders, full of many changes and challenges that are already and will continue to affect our life style. We must be prepared for the many more changes and challenges yet to come. We must follow the trends otherwise, we get left behind.

With modern education now introduced into our school curriculum, perhaps we should mention some of the obvious problems and situations that are assumably affecting the system and the special and important services that it provides to our human development process. At this point in time when things are becoming more difficult, we cannot all sit back and keep looking beyond our noses, pretending not to see the many obstacles lying right underneath our eyes and nose. Let us not deny or ignore what our conscience can see. It will eventually become a much bigger problem to solve.

As NGOs, concerned about the well-being and future of our younger generation, we wish to highlight some of the obvious situations, claimed to have caused some effects on the system and its many programmes, with proposals to be considered by those responsible, to help improve these situations within the system.

### 8.1 Older Teachers

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While we appreciate the values and wisdom of these older teachers, especially those of up to 10 more teaching years, the question, is how are they coping with the modern education teaching techniques? Older teachers have been known to be more dedicated, reliable, stable, tolerant and more productive. However, with all the new changes and challenges within the system, which they may have limited knowledge of, this might become a constraining factor not only on the teacher, but also on the management itself. Re-training and capacity building could be the solution.

Therefore, it is proposed that:

- Older teachers be considered for retraining opportunities, both at the CITTC in Rarotonga and at overseas (NZ) Education Training institutions;
- Older teachers' salary be upgraded according to their personal quality and work output;
- Older teachers deserve to be better treated and recognised for the many years of untiring services to the community or the nation as a whole.

### 8.2 Other Areas

While we ponder on that thought and probably making our own judgements on the ability and capability of the teachers teaching our children, perhaps, for convenience sake, the Ministry of Education should conduct a feasibility study and evaluation on the status and quality of teachers in the work force. Or, a regular staff inspection once every six months, an incentive to make people become more responsible and alert, for any unexpected circumstances.

As far as new graduates are concerned, they should not be thrust into permanently stable position to teach, unless they have obtained the necessary Trained Teachers Teaching qualifications that may be relevant to the situation involved.

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**Quote:** "There is nothing more frightening and embarrassing than being ignorant of what others believe, expect, trust and respect you for what it is worth". (Value for money) - "KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, UNDERSTANDING AND ATTITUDE:"

With the demand and expectation of time and circumstances, NGOs would like to further propose that:

- A Teachers Rotating Scheme be introduced in all levels of teaching - Primary, Secondary and Tertiary, (depending on level of qualification), whereby teachers do not remain in the same level of classes all the time. Sometimes, this may cause stagnancy and boredom in the teachers' learning process and thus cause slackness or frustration on the job;
- Education consider reinstating back into the curriculum the teaching of music, and introduce sex education to all senior classes in the schools. This will avoid unwanted or unavoidable teenage pregnancies in the schools, which might jeopardise especially, the girl's career and future.

### 9. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND EXTENSION STUDIES

The Government's Economic Recovery Programme is now the focus for our future sustainable development. The value and benefits of this programme, if it ever becomes successful, may help re-train our most qualified and productive people in the country. Although many of them have actually left the country for greener pastures in NZ and Australia, there are still opportunities for those who were left behind. The USP Continuing Education and Extension Study Programmes have been made available to replenish those who have missed out from schools, through these programmes.

However, in order to keep up with the trends, NGOs consider the USP course very useful, especially for those who do not get chances to obtain scholarship awards for overseas studies. In

fact, NGOs would prefer in-country or on-shore studies whereby, more people will benefit from them, they also cost less and the country will not lose too many of its qualified and more productive people to overseas market. In that respect, NGOs wish to further propose that USP consider including the following programmes as part of its Continuing Education or Extension Study Programmes on-shore:

- Introductory or Basic Computerising
- Intermediate Computerising
- Advance Computerising
- Small Business Management
- Women in Development
- Training of Trainers
- Human Resources Development
- Leadership and Capacity Building and Counselling
- Development and Management of NGOs
- Floral Arrangement and Management
- Arts and Crafts, and Screen Printing.

These could be regarded as short term Education and Training programmes, applicable to those people who have full-time paid jobs from which they get the finance to pay for their own courses of study. In most cases, these courses can accommodate people who have either lost their jobs in Government or school leavers who still have the potential to carry on in life except, they may have just missed out on better chances.

NGOs feel that, to ignore such circumstances may cause some community problems in which, some of these people might become a burden or a problem to the society. A lot of young people today need guidance from the community and our education system. They are not only the leaders of tomorrow, they are also the witnesses of today's teachings, which they might like to continue in their days.

#### 10. POST SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Already we have our own USP Centre in the Cook Islands, and that is accommodating the needs of people who are still trying to improve their own personal qualities. Perhaps, the

Government should consider, in partnership with the USP, expanding the capacity of the Centre, in order to be able to accommodate fully, the programmes that were proposed earlier in this report. Or, if Government can manage on its own, perhaps, it can also expand the capacity of the CITTC at Nikao, for the same purpose as described above, or other interventions in future.

As stated earlier in the report, a lot of potential school leavers are left with little chances of ever getting good employment opportunities, because they do not have the appropriate knowledge and skills for the opportunities available, may be, if the Post Secondary Institution is established, these school leavers will have a better chance to really equip themselves before trying their luck in the work force.

## 11. SCHOLARSHIP AND MANPOWER DISTRIBUTION

Since the focus of this programme, assumably, is on 'Sustainable Human Development', for 'efficient and effective services' in all serviceable outlets in the country, it is therefore, very important that the future scholarship programmes be developed to meet and accommodate the manpower needs of not just the Government organisations, but all areas providing services to the general public and the country as a whole.

Our Government today has lost the capability to cope with the neglected needs of its total population, and the process of trying to re-build our country is unpredictable. However, NGOs see this as a challenge for every Cook Islander, to assist in building and strengthening the capacity and capability of our education system, in order to develop a more reliable and effective Scholarship Scheme, or, if not for the best, at least for the better. As such, then we can expect a fair share of the scholarship awards to be given to all development sectors in the country and not just to Government sectors and other favoured groups.

It is therefore proposed that:

- The old Scholarship Policy be reviewed or a new Policy be developed to suit the current situation;

- All development sectors should be represented on the Scholarship Committee;
- The proposed HRD sector be responsible for distributing relevant manpower to areas of needs, following the rules within the Scholarship Study Award Policy. This is in reference to the returning graduates at the completion of their award.

## 12. FINANCING FUTURE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

The country's critical financial situation today is beyond anybody's doubt, of a fast recovery, considering what we are going through now. Nevertheless, there is still hope for that recovery, if people are prepared to take up the challenges for a change, instead of relying on the "BIG DADDY" Government to do things all the time.

The NGOs feel that, it is time to enforce the "God Helps Those Who Help Themselves" Policy as demonstrated by the Ministry of Health's User Pay System, and abolish the "Spoon Feeding" Policy.

In the past, Government has been depended upon for all education needs for our children, although some minor contributions have been imposed upon the parents quite recently, in terms of school and bus fees for transportation.

It is obvious that the lack of finance is the main cause of every downfall in our development programmes. Surely, we are not going to sit back and watch the future of our children collapse too. Are we? What happens if we sit back and watch the world go by - and are left behind? Therefore, NGOs are appealing to every Cook Islander, especially the most privileged ones, to put their money where their mouths are and start being more responsible for our own sustainable development and better quality life.

It is proposed that:

- All families (except the less privileged) be responsible for at least half the cost of their children's education costs,

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- and special provisions be made for the less privileged families;
- An alternative financial source - a 'Revolving Fund' be established by Government or other funding agencies, whereby, parents and students can borrow money on conditions and contracts that, if the child do well, he/she do not pay the money back. If he/she fails, pay the money back, with special interest rate charge on the amount borrowed;
  - All development sectors (except NGOs - a non-profit organisation), be responsible for assisting at least half the cost of any person from their organisation as a recipient for any education award.
  - Any future Education and Training programmes conducted locally, be also developed as a cost-sharing partnership programme, where participants are charged with a small fee for refreshments etc, or they could be asked to provide their own necessities;
  - Money collected from the above, if any, could also be used to pay for any certificate awards if required.

It is hoped that the above suggestion would encourage people to be more self-reliant and able to make commitment of being responsible for their own personal development.

### 13. DIRECTION FOR USP

The University of the South Pacific must be congratulated for the untiring efforts in accommodating the Education Development needs of the entire Pacific population, and we should all be proud of our achievements during the years. It is very obvious that the University has sewn the seeds of eternity into the hearts of those people who have been and came back from there, with better understanding and better focus in life.

As we decide the future direction for the University to take, in setting out the following programmes: Credit Courses, Extension Courses, Research and Consultancy and Post Graduate Programmes, we must not forget that there will be commonalities, similarities and differences in the needs of countries in the Pacific. Where the needs are common or

similar, then the direction goes accordingly. The differences can be considered according to resources available to meet those different needs. Failing that, the University can always refer the matter back to each country to reconsider their decision or they would have to handle the matter themselves. Either way, both parties could benefit or lose and no finger-pointing either way.

### 14. CONCLUSION

As we all embark of this important journey into the world of modern Education and its impact on to our life-style, it is my sincere hope that this Seminar will be able to set a workable direction into achieving its desired goal, and thus establish the path to sustainable development and prosperity.

As NGOs, although we are handicapped in so many ways, as compared to Government and private sectors, in terms of: finance, resources, facilities, etc, our status as NGOs and our voluntary efforts should not be treated any less than the Government and private sectors. After all, we all contribute equally to the development of our nation.

Again, NGOs find this opportunity to participate in this very important programme, very encouraging and challenging, especially, working in partnership with Government and Private sectors, as we all strive together to achieve sustainability and prosperity and a better quality life for the people of the Cook Islands and of the South Pacific as a whole.

**QUOTE:** "WE CANNOT LIVE OUR PAST. WE HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM FROM 'HIM' AND OUR ANCESTORS TO TAKE OUR PEOPLE INTO THE MILLENNIUM YEAR 2000."

Last but not least, "PEOPLE WITHOUT A VISION WILL PERISH BECAUSE, THEY HAVE NO HOPE IN LIFE."

Prepared and Compiled by: Mrs Vereara Maeva, President, Cook Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations

**STRATEGIC EDUCATION PLANNING FOR THE COOK  
ISLANDS:  
A PARENT OF THE NINETIES PERSPECTIVE**

Prepared by Vaine Wichman and Tracy Williams

**Why educate?**

Often the notion of education and educating the generations connotes a formal schooling system that begins at pre-school and primary education for the masses through to secondary and then (for the lucky few) a tertiary, technical or vocational scholarship.

However, throughout the various strata's of our society, education means something different to all of us. For the sake of this paper, we focus on the definition and understanding of education in it's broadest and more dynamic sense.

Education is a lifelong process of learning basic and/or specific life skills that attune the individual (and hence the nation) to the constant evolution or changes that occur in a country.

**The Nineties**

This period has seen radical changes in the way our economy is developing. The economic reforms currently underway, will among other things, require a work force and population tuned into the ideals of competitiveness and efficient and effective work ethics.

This does not mean that the present workforce does not include human resources with these traits. The premise is that these attributes are prevalent. It is the attitude that accompanies these attributes that is absent.

For most Pacific Island countries the stark truth is that we have inherited an education system that gears individuals towards white collar public sector jobs. Take the annual graduation list of any island country and investigate where the graduates of that particular year may

have moved on to after graduation. The general trend is that over 80% of the listed will have secured jobs and positions in the public service. The remaining 20 percent would have stemmed out to secure work in private companies or developed their own company. Considering the fact that many island governments promote the urgency of private sector growth suggests that the ratio of public sector graduates to private sector is very discouraging. In fact, this continuing trend to supply the public sector with secondary and tertiary level graduates propagates the 1960's colonial perspective of upskilling island people to be able to govern and administer themselves. In the meantime, the bulk of the population who did not have the opportunity of tertiary education (let alone secondary in some cases) have more or less been left to fend for themselves in terms of upskilling to levels capable of maintaining work in the private sector.

Having come through the painful exercise of downsizing a bloated public service, the challenge now is to wean our people and future generations away from the 'spoonfed mentality' that colonialism (and in later years political patronage) has created. The challenge for the Nation's educators and leaders is to re-programme the education system (both formal and informal) to instil educational virtues in line with the clear socio-economic directions our island economies have become.

### **What a nineties parent want for their children**

Too little emphasis is placed on the importance of a child's 0-5 years. This is a period of life when the family unit and environment influences the level of growth and achievement of that child in later years. The nature and scope of childcare services has changed over the years. Increasingly, more women have entered the workforce and particularly where the extended family network can not be tapped for various reasons, working mothers have had to leave their children at day care and child minding services.

The approach to supporting the formative years of the child's life relates to the importance of imparting relevant parenting ethics at the family level. Having said this, it must be acknowledged that the composition and structure of the family has changed over the last thirty years, particularly in the urban centres of island countries. Recent census figures (1996) confirm a decline in the occupancy levels on

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Rarotonga to 4 per dwelling, as compared with 6 and 5 in the Northern and Southern Cook Islands, respectively. Traditionally, parenting skills and early childhood support were part and parcel of the socialisation process advanced by the extended family network. Nowadays, in general, the essential features of the socialisation process such as communication and development of early cognitive skills are being catered for at the pre-school level.

Following on from early childhood is the importance of an exceptional primary education, encouraging a child to love learning. Serious realignment of the education and human resource development systems in island countries must be developed along the lines of fairness, equality, and the highest standards achievable at the early childhood, pre-school and primary levels. Instilling relevant life skills at this early age is essential to establishing a country's foundation pillars. A highly motivated, culturally well-versed and confident child is a major asset of a country.

National resources must be committed to the upgrade and maintenance of high levels of output at the primary school level which will have spread on effects at the secondary and tertiary levels.

The Cook Islands is part of the global community and in line with trade and migration links with New Zealand, Australia, and other Pacific Island countries, the ability to maintain levels of communication, interaction and integration with these economies is important. This highlights the importance of maintaining high standards of relevant education to be able to compete internationally and to integrate successfully into these economies.

Progressing to the secondary and tertiary level after ensuring adequate resources are targeted at the primary school level, focuses on the demand for the life skills that will support what the child sets out to become. The integration of island countries into the global economy is inevitable. The task should be to ensure that this and the future generation will be able to cope with the pro's and con's of globalisation in a manner better than we have managed to date.

For the child that does not want to or does not qualify to take tertiary level education, provisions to ensure his/her full development in the private sector field s/he wishes to pursue needs to be activated in

human resource development visions of island countries. Adult education specialists have for years lamented support for vocational and out-of-school curricula for this group.

In the case of the Cook Islands, the economic reform period has highlighted the importance of private sector development and growth and it is expected that in the ensuing years the significance this sector will have in the national accounts will grow. Supporting private sector training requirements, whether in the subsistence or commercial sector, must be given more resource support.

Therefore, while the nineties parent realises the importance of early childhood and primary education as a firm foundation for their child's future growth, they are constantly aware of the structural changes occurring in island countries that promote private sector growth. In the Cook Islands, this mismatch of current educational directives and the expected requirements of the reformed economy in two to three years from now illustrates a common problem throughout many other island countries.

Getting the policy direction and economic growth targets correct, requires bold steps forward by all stakeholders for the sake of our childrens' future.

### **Major Areas of Need for Education/Training in the medium term**

In line with the reform mandates that the Cook Islands has adopted, there is an important need in the immediate and medium term to focus attention on upgrading the level of primary education delivery. The ADB loan for education currently under implementation will see the upgrading of primary school curriculum, rehabilitation of school equipment and essential repairs to school buildings throughout the country.

The appalling state of disrepair and the quality of primary and secondary education to the islands in the Northern and Southern Group illustrates the disparity of service delivery in the outer islands. In terms of education and health services, all outer islands want the same services that are available on Rarotonga to be made available on their islands. The realisation of this need is impossible because of limited economies of scale and high maintenance costs.

Distance education courses supplied by regional and international universities abound throughout the region. These courses cater for the bloated public service, the growing private sector and continuing education classes at the vocational and cultural levels. It appears amazing that Education Ministries throughout the region did not catch on to adapting this type of education service delivery to their remote rural areas at the primary and secondary level.

The current education policy statement for the Ministry of Education advocates 'the provision of quality education to all Cook Islanders'. And yet since 1965, we have continued to pursue a vision for providing education to all, founded on an imported model of emulating the provision of school buildings and equipment and curriculum that confined students to learning about faraway places, in their rural settings.

Distance education to the outer island schools using the medium of radio, television and satellite must be considered seriously. In terms of the equitable distribution and access to essential services this consideration proves a more viable approach than the current strategy in place.

Many outer island parents will confirm that because of the quality of education services to each island, most of their children have already attuned their sights to the unskilled labour market and dole queues of New Zealand.

### **Financing Education**

The recently held national retreat in the country noted the low priority given to Education in the total Government budget. In addition, the retreat highlighted the importance of tailoring the education curriculum to the future needs of the country in terms of developments in the lead sector-tourism, and the other productive sectors of agriculture, marine resources, local industry and private sector development and offshore financial services.

Often the case presented is to support a greater allocation of the national budget to education. However this case must be qualified by the point that more money does not necessarily mean better quality and standard of service delivery.

Given every parents concern for quality standards of education (particularly at the primary level), policy makers need to focus on the efficient allocation of resources to strategic goals.

Ewan Smith summed this strategic direction in his retreat presentation in terms of developing education standards that are 'specific, regionally competitive and portable'. To establish specificity, education stakeholders need to work together to focus on relevancy and attainment of national strategic result areas as benchmarks. To become regionally competitive and portable, all parties must readily accept the fact that our people are international commodities within the global economy. The education system must be geared to producing skilled and capable human resources that have the choice of establishing themselves in the national and/or international arena.

Furthermore, Smith supports the realignment of the public sectors delivery of educational programmes to include accredited private education providers who should be allowed to bid for the education slice of the national budget.

Consequently, the reallocation of the national budget based on approved outputs should also be extended to include educational programme providers of tertiary and vocational courses. For instance, USP and other tertiary/vocational education providers must realign the provision of programmes to specific outputs that each country may wish to purchase. If the Cook Islands is clear that value for money will be received in paying for certain tertiary courses over a period of time then this system of bidding for outputs should be adhered to rather than the traditional mode of paying dues to the institution. This format of budgetary allocation aligns the service provision of an institution with the strategic education direction of a country.

Increasingly, parents in island countries are aware of the fact that by the year 2000 and onwards, the numbers of places offered for scholarships overseas will become even more competitive. Some parents are already making investment plans to support their children's education in the years to come. Naturally, the country they may send their children to for tertiary and vocational education will be dictated by the prospects they believe their children will gain as a result, the costs involved and how conducive the social environment will be to facilitating their child's eventual attainment of study goals. More

Cook Islanders send their children who may have missed out on a scholarship to New Zealand, because of family network that support them overseas and because of the opportunities that may exist for them should they decide to remain in New Zealand.

### **Employment Patterns**

The days of parents influencing what their children should grow up to be has long disappeared. Previously, parents harped on about securing a career for life (either in the public and private sector) and being loyal to that profession. As mentioned before, the upcoming years indicate a move towards decentralisation, public sector reduction and private sector growth. The challenge of working in the Cook Islands in the next few years and onwards lies in being aware that change will dictate. Change within industries and constant change and flux in the job market. Are we preparing our children for this inevitability?

Once again in the primary level, the supply of services must provide maximum opportunities for the child to be able to explore various horizons to prepare for labour market expectations that encourage professionalism and flexibility. If we get the balance at this level correct, the assumption is that secondary, vocational and tertiary education providers can compete for a broader spectrum of students coming out of the primary level.

### **Summary of Main Points**

The nineties have heralded a period of social and economic upheavals in island economies. For parents, these upheavals have meant a revisiting of past education service delivery in the light of what the future really holds for their children. Parents will continue to want the best education system for their children. A growing number of parents are prepared to make the necessary sacrifices and mindframe shifts to ensure their children have the requisite skills to interact in the reformed economy. If at the parent and community level a strong commitment to change exists, then there is hope for the realignment of our education system away from moulding the current and future generations into effective high quality human resources that will be able to take their future in their own hands more proactively than we have. Parental expectation envisages expanding the opportunities of our children, nationally and internationally.

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The current education system therefore needs to be realigned towards meeting these expectations. In sum, these expectations capture:

- the ideals of national, regional and international competitiveness;  
As a member of the regional and global community, we are fully aware of the opportunities and potentials that exist for our children in New Zealand and Australia. How effective has the education system been in ensuring that our children have a foothold in these competitive labour markets? Revising the education system to develop and maintain relevant and high quality levels of education at all levels will support the opportunities for our future generations to compete internationally and integrate successfully in the international arena.
- equal access to basic primary education that expands, not limits, a child's growth journey;  
Providing appropriate curriculum and life skills to the primary level that will encourage their own initiative and mindframe shifts to become more proactive in their quest for learning.
- a broader spectrum of the population pursuing human resource development.  
Compulsory primary education ensures that the wider community receives an education. However the thesis is that formal education should not only concentrate on the 6-11 year age bracket but should extend to capture the development of 0-5 year age group. Supporting community education programmes such as the child welfare programme should become more visible. These Non-Government organisations have played a significant role in supporting the formative years of the child. The contribution and programmes of these existing institutions should be given a higher profile in the delivery of essential formative education programmes to parents and children alike. As providers of an essential service, such NGO

programmes should also be given the opportunity to compete for national budget support within the education allocation. Developing network of quality child care and educational services at this level will ensure a broader spectrum of the developing population being equipped with the right attitude and motivation to continue their quest for training and education.

Specific attention in enhancing this journey must consider:

- innovative means and modes of delivering basic primary education to all;  
Distance education network for the provision of services to the outer islands should be explored proactively.
- relevant support to the formative years before formal education begins;
- catering for inevitable changes as island economies consolidate their economic reform programmes.  
A highly motivated, culturally well-versed and confident child is a child who will take on changes and the upheavals that may occur as a challenge rather than as a tragedy.

### **A proposed Direction for USP to support Cook Islands Education Development**

- Provision of internally appropriate courses that support the mainstay sectors of the economy (i.e. tourism, marine resources, agriculture, offshore financial services, private sector and business development and management);
- Provision of support to the improvement of primary education provision in-country.  
Activities could include the offering of internationally recognised degrees in primary education that besides being recognised regionally are on par with Australia and New Zealand standards.

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- The realignment of USP's service delivery (on campus and extension) to the reformed education needs of the country through output budgeting process (already in action in-country) that will see the bidding by each island member for specific outputs that they expect the USP or any other tertiary/vocational/distance education provider to provide.

### Reference:

Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, Feb 1997, Summary Record of Retreat Proceedings, Retreat on the Review of the Economic Reform Programme and National Development Policy.

INVESTING IN A COMMON FUTURE

**NZODA POLICY ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**(February 1993)**

**INTRODUCTION**

Expenditure on scholarships, training awards, in-country and third country education is the single biggest sector (around one-third) of NZODA.

During the 1980's, public sector reform in New Zealand led to increased transparency of expenditure in the education sector. Full tuition fees were charged overseas students and the costs for many became a charge against the NZODA programme. NZODA policy and practice developed to keep pace with these changes in an ad hoc way.

At the same time questions were being asked in studies undertaken by multilateral and bilateral donors about the donor cost effectiveness and appropriateness of various types of support for education and training.

These factors led to a comprehensive review of all aspects of education and training being undertaken during 1992-93. As a consequence of the review an explicit rationale and objectives for NZODA to education and training were given ministerial endorsement in 1993.

**THE RATIONAL AND OBJECTIVES**

The broad rationale for assistance for education and training is grounded in foreign policy and in New Zealand's wish to establish cooperative bilateral and regional relationships.

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The specific rationale is based on the ODA Guiding Principles and is:

TO CONTRIBUTE TO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS AND JUSTICE IN ODA PARTNER COUNTRIES THROUGH THE TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS.

### **NZODA EDUCATION AND TRAINING OBJECTIVES INCLUDE:**

- The provision of education and training to meet defined human resource development needs in developing countries;
- The development among people in the recipient country (especially those who are or will be community leaders), familiarity with and a favourable disposition toward New Zealand;
- Ensuring NZODA to education and training is cost effective;
- The provision of equitable access to educational opportunities;\*
- The demonstration of New Zealand's education and technical expertise.

\* *The Minister has directed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to achieve a 50:50 male/female ratio for NZODA-funded students and trainees by 1998.*

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