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***NON FORMAL EDUCATION:
MEETING BASIC EDUCATION CHALLENGES IN THE PACIFIC***

The attached paper, prepared by Ms Helen Tavola for the Forum Secretariat, presents an outline of the contribution of Non Formal Education to basic education in the Pacific and related policy issues for the consideration of Ministers.

NON FORMAL EDUCATION: MEETING BASIC EDUCATION CHALLENGES IN THE PACIFIC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is a clear mismatch between the number of young people leaving school each year in Pacific Forum Island Countries (FICs) and the number of employment and training opportunities available. There is an urgent need to create further opportunities, in order to improve the lives of our young populations. Non-formal education (NFE) is a form of training that occurs outside of the formal school system and it has the potential to fill this gap and become a dynamic force for change in the Pacific. NFE is available to all adults, but many programmes are focused towards early school-leavers. Courses are tailored to the needs of communities, and are typically oriented to practical skills and life-skills. Literacy and numeracy may be components of NFE programmes. Teaching methods tend to be participatory and learner-centred.

2. NFE is already well established in FICs. While many government ministries and departments carry out NFE, it is principally conducted by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Churches are often key NFE providers. Although many thousands participate in NFE programmes, it can only cater for a small proportion of the potential demand, which is much greater than existing capacity. There tends to be a gender gap in participation, favouring males, in many NFE programmes.

3. There is great variety in NFE programmes, from well-established institutions to locally based operations that have little funding. Courses vary greatly both in content and length. This variety means that both duplication and fragmentation can occur. It also means that there are no common standards, making regulation difficult.

4. A relatively recent trend is to link NFE with micro-enterprise and micro-financing developments, as a major focus of NFE is employment creation or income generation. NFE can provide short flexible training in areas related to micro-finance and the running of small enterprises.

5. A major advantage of NFE is that it is cost-effective, especially when compared to the formal education sector. NFE can also contribute effectively to poverty alleviation, enabling people to have secure, sustainable livelihoods. NFE can complement formal education in several ways, such as sharing buildings and facilities, sharing staff, training parents to support their children's education and training in the establishment and running of pre-schools.

6. NFE is typically constrained by lack of finance. Another difficulty is attitudinal – NFE is often negatively regarded as second best. Thus NFE needs government support. There is an urgent need for clear policies on NFE in most FICs. Governments need to designate a lead ministry to co-ordinate NFE to avoid the present situation of duplication and fragmentation. Evaluation, monitoring and assessment by the lead ministry will help with quality control and will ensure sustainability. There is a need for more training and capacity building, which can be provided at national or regional levels. Along with clear policy and commitment, NFE needs resources. Donors have recognised NFE as a valid area, and government

support will further endorse it. National governments need to make serious commitments to NFE, and enter into active partnerships with NGOs who provide this vital form of training.

7. Regional bodies can also assist NFE, for example in training and information sharing and collection. Non-governmental organisations can also extend their regional reach to share training and capacity building.

Recommendations:

8. Ministers may wish to consider the following recommendations:

a) *Recognising* that non-formal education is an important strategy for development, Governments address immediate NFE needs, including budgetary needs, by undertaking the following actions:

- provide effective communications linkages between NFE, micro-enterprise and micro-financing initiatives.
- establish a focal point (within the appropriate Ministry or department within a ministry) which has close partnerships with NFE providers.
- provide an enabling environment by actively co-ordinating NFE initiatives.
- develop clear and robust national policy on NFE.
- support training at national and regional levels for NFE key personnel.
- ensure effective evaluation and monitoring of NFE programmes.

NON FORMAL EDUCATION: MEETING BASIC EDUCATION CHALLENGES IN THE PACIFIC

1.0 Introduction

One of the major social concerns in Forum Island Countries (FICs) today is that alongside the growing demand for more and higher levels of quality education, is the stark fact that our small domestic economies cannot offer employment to the majority of school-leavers. Only a small number will qualify for the relatively low number of places at tertiary institutions. Those who leave the school system before attaining any qualifications, or who have never attended school, are particularly disadvantaged. Every year, more job-seekers enter the labour market. What does the future hold for them? Long-term unemployment in urban areas or under-employment in rural areas are likely scenarios.

2. The UNDP estimated in 1999 that there were 1.4 million young people aged 15 to 24 years in Pacific Island countries, representing 20 per cent of the region's population, and this number is increasing rapidly.¹ Their needs are pressing, as they are the future of the region. Formal education is not teaching the life-skills that these young people require in order to bring themselves as individuals and their countries out of poverty.

3. Economic growth in the Pacific has been slow and prospects for the future are not particularly promising.

*In recent years, despite vigorous efforts to promote the economic performance of the island states, the outcome in terms of growth and employment has been disappointing. Modest levels of growth are associated with resource development, and had only a marginal impact on employment.*²

4. The formal education system does not prepare its students well for self-employment in either urban or rural settings. A UNDP document on Non-formal Education programme stated:

*Students are 'pushed out' of schools as a result of a rigid examination system, schools in many rural areas do not go beyond primary grades and many do have the facilities to provide efficient teaching where they do exist. In addition to this, curriculum in the formal education system has largely been geared towards jobs in the public sector and does not provide adequate training for the type of work young people might need in order to pursue subsistence or informal sector employment.*³

¹ UNDP, 1999, *Pacific Human Development Report*, p.35

² Cole, R.V., 2000, *Pacific 2010, Opportunities for Non-formal Education in Melanesia*, p.9

³ UNDP Non-formal Education Draft Project Document, 1998, p.2

5. There are other reasons why children leave school early. A Save the Children Fund study in Fiji found that financial difficulties was the main reason for the failure to attend school. Poverty was often compounded by low educational levels of parents as well as family problems such as single-parent families and children being left with relatives, particularly grandparents.⁴ Reasons such as lack of access due to geographical factors are also important in some parts of the Pacific. Access to secondary education is often more of a problem than to primary schooling.

6. Non-formal education can help in addressing the shortfall of the formal education system as it has the potential to teach skills to people that are relevant to both urban and rural lifestyles, which can help improve the quality of their lives by enhancing their economic well-being. Such skills can, for example, enable people to gain employment, start a small enterprise or improve their farming or fishing practices, maybe adding value to traditional products. It can therefore make a direct contribution to the alleviation of poverty and sustainable development.

7. Non-formal education is often located in a ministry other than the Ministry of Education, thus it is an area of which Ministers of Education may be relatively unaware. This paper will set out the key characteristics of non-formal education and will explain its benefits and advantages.

8. There is such great diversity in non-formal education in the Pacific that it is difficult to make generalisations that apply to all situations. There are, however, certain common characteristics.

- *Governments should recognise non-formal education as an important strategy for development.*

2.0 What is Non-formal Education?

9. Non-formal education (NFE) is a term that is often used inter-changeably with terms such as community education, adult education, lifelong education and second-chance education. Although definitions vary, there are some common features which characterise NFE in FICs:

- NFE takes place outside the formal school system.
- Programmes are offered to adults, but many programmes have a focus on early school leavers. Certain disadvantaged groups are often targeted through NFE, for example: ex-prisoners, disabled people and women.
- NFE courses do not usually lead to formal qualifications, although there are exceptions.
- The subject matter taught is usually geared to meet the specific needs of local communities and are typically oriented to practical skills and life-skills that are immediately useful to the participants to improve their quality of life. Delivery is often therefore community based.

⁴ Save the Children Fund Fiji, 1998, *Keeping Children in School*, p.21

- Literacy and numeracy may be components of NFE programmes.
- NFE is more flexible than formal education and responds quickly to changing needs.
- Teaching methods tend to be participatory and learner-centred, rather than teacher-centred. NFE may follow traditional/indigenous learning styles.
- There is a great variety in NFE programmes, from well-established institutions that run accredited courses, to locally based operations that have little funding.
- NFE is carried out by a wide range of government bodies, but is the principal domain of non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
- NFE has a strong, but not exclusive, focus on the development of income-generating activities and job creation. There is also considerable emphasis on empowerment.
- Some NFE programmes have an emphasis on character formation and spiritual aspects. Human rights education is also a focus of some NFE programmes.

3.0 NFE in FICs

10. NFE is well established in all FICs. A wide range of NGOs, churches and government ministries and departments are involved in various forms of training that come under the NFE umbrella. In Fiji, for example, 16 government ministries and over 100 NGOs are involved in delivering NFE programmes. Many FIC governments have acknowledged that NGOs are better placed to deliver NFE than governments.

11. NFE covers many areas such as literacy and basic education, primary health care and issues surrounding reproductive health, environmental issues, agriculture, fishing and rural development. Courses vary in length from a few days to years, and also in the degree of formality of their programmes.

12. The great variety in forms of NFE has positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, the diversity reflects dynamism in the field as well as a wide range of opportunities. The downside is that duplication can easily occur, and there is a real possibility of fragmentation and a lack of co-ordination. It also means that there are no common standards, making it difficult to regulate.

13. There are various ways of classifying different types of NFE, but one of the most common is to classify programmes as institutional and non-institutional. There are many institutions in the Pacific, but there is a growing trend for NFE to take place outside of institutional structures.

14. A number of FICs have Rural Training Centres (RTCs). These generally conduct courses of one to three years for youth in their local catchment areas. Many of these courses have focused on males. In some cases, RTCs have used teaching methods like

those used in formal education. This is largely due to the fact that instructors are untrained in more participatory teaching methods favoured by NFE.

15. Many NFE courses across the Pacific are short-term 'one-off' courses. UNDP has commented on this type of training:

*...even though the training is appropriate, unless it is built into a broader programme, it usually leads nowhere in terms of creating employment and generating income, especially for youth.*⁵

16. NFE falls under various government ministries in different FICs. In some cases it is linked to the Ministry of Education, but in others it is with another Ministry such as Youth. In some FICs there is no particular Ministry appointed to co-ordinate NFE.

17. Although many thousands take part in NFE programmes throughout the Pacific region, it is only a small proportion of the potential clientele. The demand for places is much higher than the number of courses available.

18. A relatively recent trend is to link NFE programmes with micro-financing programmes. Such schemes offer training in a particular area, such as bee-keeping, cut flowers, bakery or tapa production, and provide loans to start businesses. Many of these businesses are in the informal sector of the economy. This is discussed further in Section 4.0.

19. There is a growing and urgent need to disseminate information about reproductive health issues. Teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and the very real threat of AIDS are issues that can be addressed through non-formal education, possibly better than through any other medium. The work of the AIDS task force is described in Appendix 5.

20. NFE has tended to favour males in many FICs.⁶ Subject areas such as agriculture, mechanics and technical subjects have typically been the focus of many NFE programmes. Rural Training Centres tend to have a male bias in their programmes. Courses for female NFE students tend to echo domestic roles: cooking, sewing, traditional crafts etc. There is a need to address the gender imbalance and to ensure that females have equal opportunities in NFE. There are an increasing number of female-headed households, and reports indicate that these are the most likely to face poverty.⁷ NFE programmes offer a way out of poverty for many women.

21. The potential contribution of women is unrealised. Yet women have shown themselves to be entrepreneurial, and are often involved in selling goods and services. Both rural and urban women work hard to provide for their family's needs, and are receptive to learning new ideas.

4.0 NFE and Micro-Enterprise Development

⁵ UNDP Non-formal Education Draft Project Document, 1998, p.6

⁶ UNDP, 1999, *Pacific Human Development Report*, p.49

⁷ See for example the *Fiji Poverty Report* (1997) published by the Government of Fiji and UNDP

22. A major focus of NFE is employment creation or income generation. Training needs to be linked with micro-enterprise development and micro-financing so that NFE can actually improve people's lives.

23. Many households in the Pacific are involved in informal economic activities, such as cooking, child-minding, sewing, selling crops, selling cigarettes and kava. Training through NFE can assist such people to increase their potential income from such activities and to venture into new activities.

24. Small business activities in both the formal and informal sector have characteristics that make them well suited to link with NFE. They tend to be labour-intensive; they can play a special role in poor areas in meeting the demand for affordable, simple goods and services; they can mobilise human and natural resources at a local level in a cost-effective manner. There can be linkages with the formal sector. In Fiji, a local company called Sandollars produces and packages high quality coconut oil products for local sale and for export. Rural people have been trained to make hand-made paper for packaging, which they make from local plants. Women from squatter settlements around Suva make small baskets for the company. Other people make small decorations from bone and coconut shell.

25. While developing such micro-enterprises may be going beyond the brief of Ministers of Education, it is important that NFE is not seen in isolation. In brief, governments' roles in micro-enterprise development are to provide leadership and strategic vision as well as facilitating initiative by:

- Creating an enabling environment for small and micro-enterprises (SME), for example by lowering the cost of doing business, reducing the level of regulation for SMEs, for example licences should be simplified and fees not too high.
- Providing incentives for SMEs, such as tax holidays.
- SMEs often need assistance with marketing strategies. Marketing and establishing a regular market supply are often the weakest link in many projects.⁸

26. NFE can provide short flexible training in micro-finance, the running of small businesses, agro-based projects and understanding government regulations pertaining to the setting up of enterprises.

- *Government should provide linkages between NFE, micro-enterprise and micro-financing initiatives.*

5.0 The Benefits of NFE

27. One of the biggest plus factors is that NFE is **cost-effective**. With relatively low inputs, NFE can realise success. It is much less costly than its formal counterpart. Yet, budgetary allocations for NFE are low compared to those of formal education. In Fiji for example, in 2000, the budget for NFE was about 1.3% of that of formal education.⁹ In Solomon Islands, NFE receives 2% of the education budget.¹⁰

⁸ UNDP, 2000, *Sustaining Livelihoods. Promoting Informal Sector Growth in Pacific Island Countries*, p.44

⁹ *Report of the Fiji Islands Education Commission/Panel*, 2000, p.

¹⁰ Tavola, Helen, 2000, p.48

28. Another benefit is that NFE can play a significant role in **poverty alleviation**. NFE can teach people how to improve agricultural practices for greater productivity, thus improving food security and levels of nutrition. Earning cash income can help pay for the needs of changing lifestyles.

29. NFE providers often see their training as **holistic**: they do not only teach skills, but they aim to empower their trainees, by instilling confidence and a sense of ownership in their programmes and projects. Training in areas such as human rights, reproductive health and leadership are important components of some NFE programmes. Some believe that the method and participation are as important, or even more important, than the actual content of the programme.

30. NFE is flexible and dynamic. It is not locked into a set curriculum, so can meet the needs specific to localities.

6.0 Links between NFE and the Formal Education System

31. Although the non-formal and formal sectors of education exist separately and have somewhat differing ideologies, they complement each other and can actively assist each other in many ways. The two systems are not in competition and will never substitute for each other, The overall goal is the same – teaching and learning to improve the lives of individuals and to contribute to the development of communities and nations. There is considerable synergy – mutual benefits – between formal and non-formal education

32. NFE should be seen as a valid system in its own right, not as a system making up for the short-comings of the formal system.

33. There are many ways that the two systems can work together, such as:

- **Sharing buildings and facilities**: schools can be encouraged to be multi-purpose learning centres. Costly equipment such as technical equipment and computers can be used out of school hours by NFE classes.
- **Sharing staff**: many teachers are involved with NFE programmes out of school hours on a voluntary basis. There is a view that they should be paid for their work.
- **Training parents** to be more supportive of their own children's education. (The regional BELS programme¹¹ has had a component on Community Support, which has had the explicit aim of developing supportive links between parents and schools.)
- **The establishment and running of pre-schools**, particularly in countries where the government relies on communities to run their own pre-schools.

34. NFE can also be a bridging course to formal education, providing entry prerequisites for courses.

35. Some people believe that NFE should eventually be integrated into the formal school system. In some cases, when a NFE institution has been successful, it becomes part of the formal system. This is an issue of some debate and controversy. There is a

¹¹ BELS is the acronym for Basic Education and Literacy Support (formerly Basic Education and Life Skills) – a regional project which has had three phases. BELS has been funded by UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, AusAID and NZODA.

view that the emphasis on complementarity has blurred the distinction that needs to be made between the two different forms of education.

36. As mentioned in 5.0, the participatory methodology of NFE, which directly empowers its participants, is quite different to the passive-recipient type of teaching typical of the formal system. Where formal education tends not to teach decision-making skills, NFE emphasises this aspect. NFE can re-build the confidence of youths who have been failures in the formal system, and teaches them that they can make a contribution to their communities and nations.

37. There are possibilities for NFE to link into the formal system, for example in the area of reproductive health. This is an area that the formal system does not handle well, but in which NFE is having great success.

7.0 Non-formal Education and Technical/Vocational Education

38. There is sometimes confusion between the terms non-formal education and technical and or vocational education.

39. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) tends to refer to a narrower type of education, which as its name implies has a largely technical component. NFE, in contrast, often includes TVET, but the scope is broader. For example, rather than just teaching a technical skill, NFE programmes may include components such as literacy, the environment, marketing and leadership skills.

40. TVET can take place in either NFE or formal educational settings. TVET programmes tend to be more institution based than NFE, as they depend on equipment and buildings. Often they are attached to schools. Because of this location, TVET courses tend to be taught in more traditional, formal styles than NFE. Some institutions in the Pacific offer both TVET and NFE type of courses. In some cases the distinction is blurred.

8.0 Constraints

41. Most NFE programmes face ever-present financial constraints. Father McVerry, who has had over 30 years of NFE experience at Fiji's Tutu Training Centre commented that:

*NFE projects are romanticised by politicians when they visit them, but when budget cuts are made in cabinet rooms, it is normally the first area to disappear from the budget paper. Our audience has no voice.*¹²

42. Another difficulty is that people in FICs tend to look at NFE as second best to the formal system. In some cases it is seen as the last option. Negative labels are used such as courses for 'dropouts', rather than terms such as early school leaver. Such negativity is reinforced by the frequently poor facilities and staffing of many NFE programmes.

¹² Quoted in Veramu, 2000, p.4

43. Lack of certification is seen as a drawback by some. People want their training to be recognised and validated, to give it credibility.

44. There is a lack of a small enterprise culture in the Pacific. Some consultants have made comparisons with Asia, where selling goods and services is commonplace. In some Pacific cultures, selling is regarded as shameful and embarrassing. Most school leavers look for work in the formal sector, rather than thinking of self-employment. Young people lack confidence, as in many Pacific Island cultures, youths are not involved in decision-making.

45. There is a need to improve the image of NFE, as it holds so much potential for a large number of people. Strong government support will help the image of NFE.

9.0 The Role of Governments in NFE

46. NGOs have proved to be effective providers of NFE, but there is a definite role for governments in this area. Clearly, the most crucial role of governments is political commitment to NFE. Governments need to provide an enabling environment by focussing on NFE in a systematic way, hence the need to develop policy frameworks and locate NFE, with funding, in an appropriate government ministry. NFE sections or departments need to be staffed with qualified and experienced individuals of a high calibre.

47. It is important for there to be a focal point for NFE, and governments are the well placed to be in this position. However, the partnership with NGOs should always be at the forefront as it is fundamental to the delivery of NFE. Many FICs already have task forces, mainly consisting of NFE providers, who work in close association with the relevant ministry, to inform them and to help shape policy. The strength of these taskforces is often an indicator of the vigour of the NFE sector.

- *Governments should facilitate the establishment of a focal point, a Ministry or department within a ministry, which has close partnerships with NFE providers.*

9.1 Co-ordination

48. There is a lack of knowledge and data on NFE in many FICs. The relevant ministry in each country needs an audit of all types of NFE, both institutional and non-institutional. Such an audit may reveal 'best practices' that might be used as examples, and equally, practices that are best avoided. Constraints in the implementing of NFE can be identified. It can also assist the relevant government ministry to encourage networking between NFE providers where appropriate.

49. Proper co-ordination of the NFE sector can mean that duplication is avoided in the provision of courses and programmes. Duplication is costly and inefficient, but is not uncommon. Conversely, co-ordination of NFE can identify gaps: geographical areas or sections of society that have needs for NFE, but little provision.

- *Government should provide an enabling environment by actively co-ordinating NFE initiatives.*

9.2 Policy

50. One of the most pressing needs in most FICs is for clear national policies on NFE. Policies raise government recognition of NFE as a national development strategy. Policies set out priorities and directions and give a framework for operations. Currently, very few FICs have a policy in place, and this makes work difficult for those working in the field. Clear government policies will help to make NFE more efficient and effective.

51. Solomon Islands was the first FIC to set a policy for NFE. This can be found in Appendix 2. Fiji has been working on a NFE policy since 1999, and it should be adopted this year. The status of NFE policy-making in FICs can be found in Appendix 1.

52. Policies need to be accompanied by action plans. A workshop in Suva last year, for example, discussed a proposed action plan to go with the draft NFE policy, which included collating a database of NFE programmes and expertise; creating a website; writing a regular national NFE newsletter and having workshops and forums for trainers.

53. Policies should be kept under active review to enable new issues and constraints to be considered.

54. The UNDP has been actively encouraging and assisting FICs to develop NFE policies since 1999. UNDP has drawn up a list of principles for Policy Development, which can be found in Appendix 4. Despite this, it has to be said that the lack of progress on policy formulation in most FICs is very disappointing. Policy must be country driven, not donor driven.

- *Governments should develop a clear and robust national policy on NFE.*

9.3 Training and Capacity Building

55. There needs to be a concerted programme to build the capacity of trainers working in NFE. The lack of well-trained NFE personnel is a major gap in the system.

56. Several regional bodies are already engaged in training for NFE. Regional organisations have already proved their value in this area, and the courses that have been established need to be supported and sustained. The development of training materials and the training of trainers could be promoted on a regional level. The general exchange of ideas and practices would benefit those involved by sharing experiences of best practices as well as pitfalls to avoid.

57. On a regional basis, the University of the South Pacific offers courses in NFE at certificate, diploma, undergraduate and post-graduate level.

58. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community offers training to women at its Community Education Training Centre in Fiji and for disadvantaged youth at its Pacific Youth Resource Bureau in Noumea.

59. UNESCO and UNICEF are involved with youth training activities in various FICs.

60. The Commonwealth Youth Programme offers a Diploma and Certificate in Youth and Development, both by distance education.

61. Existing programmes need to be expanded as only a small number of NFE trainers have had the benefit of training. There is real potential for existing programmes to link in with national training institutions in this area.

- *Governments should support training at national and regional levels for NFE key personnel.*

9.4 Quality Control

62. In most FICs, any person or group can set up a NFE programme of any quality and length. Governments, in a co-ordinating role, can monitor quality, at least to some extent. Governments as focal points for NFE can set benchmarks or standards against which the performance of service providers can be measured. This will improve the overall credibility of the NFE sector.

63. A regulatory framework for NFE should be incorporated into national policies.

64. There have been calls in some countries for regularising of curricula, especially in the case of RTCs, so that recognised certificates can be given on completion. This is again controversial, as some see it as a way of ‘formalising’ NFE, a process that may detract from some of the valuable attributes of NFE such as its diversity and flexibility.

9.5 Ensuring Sustainability

65. Government can monitor NFE programmes to ensure their long-term sustainability. There have been many ‘hit-and run’ projects in FICs – projects that have not been well planned and which have disappeared when key personnel leave or when funding ceases. Such programmes can damage the reputation of NFE.

9.6 Evaluation

66. Evaluation of NFE programmes is generally a low priority. Programme providers are usually too concerned with the immediate issue of running effective programmes. Evaluation tends to look at numbers of participants or graduates, rather than looking at inputs and processes. There is a lack of data or knowledge on how NFE has affected people’s lives in the long-term. The use of tracer studies could find this information. Material on the effect of programmes tends to be anecdotal and fragmented.

67. Some NFE programmes do not have clear objectives, thus it is hard to measure progress. Government can assist NFE providers to have a clear set of objectives, so that programmes are clearly defined and can be evaluated against those objectives.

- *Government should take an evaluating and monitoring role, to promote sustainability of projects.*

9.7 Resources

68. NFE is an essential sector of education, and needs funding. Available statistics on funding for NFE (refer to section 5.0) show that NFE is poorly funded by government when compared to formal education. Governments can assist funding by seeking donor contributions. Many donors are receptive to NFE initiatives. Clear government policies on NFE will make it more attractive to donors, as policies are a reflection of commitment. There are some substantial donor assisted NFE projects in the region.

69. NFE also needs sound human resources. NFE typically relies on voluntary and poorly paid workers, but there is a need for key personnel to be well-qualified and well-versed in the field of NFE.

- *Governments should show commitment to NFE through realistic budgetary support.*

10.0 The Role of Regional Bodies

70. To date, there have been few regional bodies specifically focused on NFE although some projects, such as BELS, have NFE components. There is potential for regional bodies to be involved in NFE to promote active regional co-operation and liaison. Regional initiatives in training are mentioned in 9.3.

71. There is no regional source of information on NFE. There is a need for a repository of information, which can be used as a resource centre by policy-makers, providers and students. To facilitate access, it is essential that such a resource centre be accessible electronically.

72. Some NGOs have set an example of regional cooperation. The partnership between the AIDS Taskforce of Fiji and its partner NGOs is a good model of this and is described further in Appendix 5.

73. The Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) could have a working group on NFE to raise awareness and to discuss relevant issues.

11.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

74. Although there are many success stories in NFE in the region, only a small percentage of people have benefited. The UNDP Pacific Human Development Report 1999 stated that:

*Throughout the region there needs to be a larger and more concerted approach to skills training, and a better match between the courses available and the needs and aspirations of the students.*¹³

¹³ UNDP, 1999, *Pacific Human Development Report 1999: Creating Opportunities*, UNDP, Suva, p.49

75. NFE needs serious commitment from national governments, so that it can effectively complement formal education systems. The synergy between the two sectors needs to be explored and enhanced.

76. Governments need to foster partnerships with the NGO sector to actively participate in this dynamic area of education, to provide an enabling environment, to assist in capacity-building and to make NFE more clearly focused and better coordinated.

77. The potential that NFE has to transform the lives of Pacific youth is real and needs to be taken very seriously.

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Appendices

1. Summary of Non-formal Education in Forum Island Countries.
2. The Solomon Islands Policy on Non-formal Education
3. The UNDP Regional Project on Non-formal Education
4. Principles for Policy Development
5. The Aids Task Force of Fiji as an Example of a Non-governmental Organisation with a Regional Reach in Non-formal Education.

Appendix 1

Summary of Practice and Policy in Non-formal Education in Forum Island Countries

Country	NFE policy	NFE practices	Notes
Cook Islands	No	Many government departments, churches & NGOs involved in delivery of NFE.	2 of the 5 programmes of the Action Plan concerned with education & skills: the National Training Authority Project and Education & Skills Training
Federated States of Micronesia	No	Numerous NFE type programmes, some under the government wing. Churches & NGOs also involved.	Many NFE programmes funded Assistance Programme, such as Partnership Act Program and Adult Education program.
Fiji	Draft completed - should be finalised in 2001	Many government departments, churches & NGOs involved in delivery of NFE.	A wide range of institutional NFE programmes exist.
Kiribati	No	Many government departments, churches & NGOs involved in delivery of NFE. Several Rural Training Centres run by churches & government.	Efforts are being made to co-ordinate officer is attached to the Ministry of Training & Technology who runs rural training centres.
Marshall Islands	In process of development.	NGOs, churches plus various federally funded programmes.	Government has expressed its national entity to co-ordinate education.
Nauru	No	Government, churches and NGOs all provide NFE programmes. Nauru Vocational Training Centre offers wide range of courses.	Government acknowledges its role in training, especially for post-secondary
Niue	No	Government schemes, church, youth, social and sports clubs are key providers.	
Palau	No	Palau Adult Education Program conducts courses for out-of-school youth. Other government & semi government bodies, NGOs and church groups also provide NFE.	

Papua New Guinea	No	Large number of NGOs, church and community groups provide diverse range of NFE programmes. Adult literacy is important component of many programmes.	Government has acknowledged NFE in order to avoid duplication. Several donor funded NFE projects.
Samoa	No	Most NFE provided by NGOs although many government departments have programmes that could be described as NFE.	
Solomon Islands	Yes	Rural Training Centres important. Adult literacy important component of many NFE programmes.	NFE has very clear government co-ordination. Substantive donor funded projects.
Tonga	No	Government Community Development and Training Centre, plus churches and NGOs provide NFE. Some have religious component.	
Tuvalu	No	Adult education has developed especially since 1990. Many government departments, churches & NGOs involved in delivery of NFE	Government has agreed to have NFE co-ordinator on each island. Education plan called 'Education for Quality Education to 2020'.
Vanuatu	In process of development.	Adult literacy important component of many NFE programmes, aimed mainly at women. Rural Training Centres important. Vanuatu Association of NGOs provides some co-ordination, as does Vanuatu Rural Development Training Centres.	Several donor funded projects for literacy and Rural Training Centres.

Appendix 2

Solomon Islands National Policy for Non-formal Educationⁱ

1. Overview

Non-formal education is structured to enhance people's knowledge and skills so as to give them wider range to improve the quality of their lives and to offer more opportunities for livelihoods, whether in the formal or informal sectors. It should be seen as an education system more clearly identified with the economic needs of both the rural and urban groups.

Non-formal education can be thought of as organised programs of learning which normally takes place outside the traditional classroom. The programs are usually shorter and more narrowly focused than programs of formal schooling. It can be concerned with occupational skills or with subjects such as literacy or citizenship but would best be linked to better and more varied use of local resources to enhance people's livelihoods and to improve the quality of their lives.

2. Framework

The non-formal education system should be

- outside the formal examinable system and not necessarily attempt to reach nationally recognised standards
- organised, but not hierarchically structured
- flexible in content, duration and location
- people focused, aiming to develop the whole person and incorporating traditional skill and values
- related to all aspects of human development; aiming to improve the quality of life and help those involved to understand and control their own lives, while at the same time providing a basis for livelihood
- available to people of all ages, women and men, young and old
- carried out by a wide range of non-governmental organisations, government departments, agencies, churches and local communities.

3. Participants

Often the participants in non-formal education programs are adults. However, the older youth population (young school leavers) with greater maturity could be strengthened by this form of training.

Special attention would be focused on the needs of women and people with disabilities to be better skilled to use their local resource base more productively.

4. Objectives

To heighten the awareness of people in both rural and urban areas as to what is happening in their own areas, in the country and in the world around them.

To help link rural and urban groups with their cultural and natural resource base, informing them of their worth and the need to protect them for sustainable harvesting not only to guard the environment but to increase employment opportunities and income prospects.

To enhance village communities' efforts to be more active and outward looking. People must be aided to become more involved with their own wellbeing, increase their wealth production capacities and be more committed to higher productivity.

To improve people's level of knowledge about health, quality of life issues and physical wellbeing.

To assist people to identify and help solve group problems and issues. Non-formal education could help people mobilise joint efforts which will instill a sense of pride and satisfaction.

5. Partners in non-formal education

The people. The most basic strength in non-formal education must be to call upon the people's understanding, awareness and participation in the program. Non-formal education cannot be imposed from above but will only thrive when villagers, landowners, youth, urban dwellers and the whole of the population have a good grasp of what non-formal education is all about. The people will signal to non-formal education deliverers – teachers, trainers, organisations, departments – what it is they require. On account of past inequalities in education, women are emerging as a group in need of support as well as those who have never had the opportunity to attend school, such as the elderly.

The government. The demands placed on governments in the field of education are enormous and growing. Solomon Islands, already contributing 19 per cent (1991) to the yearly budget, knows that demands on it can only grow in the years to come. Non-formal education offers government a chance to reach out to its people without at the same time calling for huge budgetary increases.

Governments will need to work closely with non-formal education deliverers to lay down a policy framework, setting benchmarks against which the performance of the wide range of service providers can be measured. Policy guidelines should state quite clearly just what support non-formal education delivery organisations can and cannot expect from the administration.

The service deliverers. Government ministries, non-government organisations, RTCs, churches, villagers themselves, community, school, business houses etc – would be some of the major players in servicing communities with non-formal education.

The non-formal education deliverers would work to have non-formal education patterns reach out to all parts of the nation and do its best to minimise duplication of efforts.

6. Summary

Both formal and non-formal education are vital elements in the future of Solomon Islands. Formal education is well established and its role recognised by people and governments. Non-formal education, although practiced for centuries by Solomon Islands, currently lacks a formal national image.

The Solomon Islands Government, then, should recognise the role of non-formal education to ensure the future social and economic wellbeing of the country.

Appendix 3

The UNDP Regional Project on Non-Formal Education

The UNDP Sixth Cycle of Pacific Regional Inter-Country Programmes identified 'Job Creation and Sustainable Development' as its major long-term objective. One of the aims of the Human Resource Development component is to 'strengthen service delivery capacities at both national and community levels for formal and non-formal education'. The regional project on non-formal education was thus developed in response to the theme of job creation and sustainable livelihoods. Its aim is to broaden opportunities for skills development outside of the formal school system with an emphasis on out-of-school youth and people in the informal or semi-subsistence sector.¹

The programme aims to:

- Raise awareness and promote recognition of the value of NFE in both the government and non-government sector, particularly its potential to address the critical problems of unemployment and displaced young people in many Pacific Island Countries;
- Assist stakeholders in NFE to identify and promote a demand for NFE at country level, and to develop targets and plans of action and appropriate processes in order to achieve those targets;
- Assist in creating an enabling environment for the promotion of NFE in selected Pacific Island Countries (PICs)

By the end of the project (April 2002) UNDP will have assisted Ministries of Education or Youth (or other ministries) in PICs to develop a policy for NFE. Government departments will be working through NGOs and community based organizations for NFE, playing a planning and funding role rather than implementing NFE programmes per se.

The project aims to raise the profile of NFE as a viable and important complement to formal education, leading the way in a changing economic environment so that education becomes more closely allied to income generation and sustainable development.

The total UNDP input into the NFE programme is currently uncertain as cuts to the regional programme reduced an original budget allocation of USD2.0million to USD750,000 for a 3 year period. Total financial input will be enhanced by cost sharing with other agencies.

The main activities of the programme to date have been the organisation of a regional seminar in Vanuatu in October 1999 (also funded by DFID), which five PICs attended.. The Vanuatu seminar developed a set of principles, steps and options for policy development, part of which can be found in Appendix 3. A further workshop was held in Fiji in November 1999, which was a direct follow-up from the Vanuatu seminar. The programme has assisted ongoing policy development work in Fiji.

Appendix 4

Principles for Policy Developmentⁱⁱ

In reviewing a range of policy options that could be considered by governments to promote and develop NFE, the seminar agreed that such policies should be developed around certain key principles.

- Promote a vision of development that is not only economically sustainable but is “people-centred” which includes both formal and nonformal education for both formal and informal sector employment in rural and urban areas.
- NFE cannot be considered in isolation from formal education. However while NFE is complementary to formal education it covers a wide range of sectors. Wherever appropriate, links should be established between NFE and formal education although the main objective of NFE is not to provide a pathway to formal education.
- Policies must be linked to national development strategies and plans, resource allocations and other policy commitments.
- They should recognise different levels and categories of nonformal education ranging from urban to rural and covering both the formal and informal sectors.
- They should also include the full range of stakeholders: commercial, government, teachers, NGOs and regional and national training institutions.
- Policies should be accompanied by the development of a plan of action with commitment by the various stakeholders to contribute to the resourcing and implementation of parts of that plan based on their existing capacities.
- Policies should be developed recognising the unique contribution of successful examples of nonformal education and facilitate and support them.
- Policies should be developed based on specific evidences of success that demonstrate the need for NFE and convince policy makers of the importance of NFE. This requires the collection of data on the number and success of schemes in meeting objectives and the piloting of new ways of providing NFE.
- Policies should be developed and incentives should be provided to encourage a greater number of people to engage in or provide financial or material support to NFE initiatives.

Appendix 5

The Work of the AIDS Taskforce of Fiji, as an Example of a Non-governmental Organisation with a Regional Reach in Non-formal Education.

The AIDS Taskforce of Fiji (ATFF) was started in 1994. It has been supported by AusAID's Regional HIV/AIDS initiative from 1997 to 2000, through the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations. ATFF has trained many peer educators and community educators in Fiji, using participatory non-formal education methodology. It is using its training model to strengthen the capacity of other NGOs in the region, as described below.

Regional NGO Capacity Building:

The Regional Capacity Building (RCB) component facilitates the designing and implementation of HIV and STI project capacity building for Pacific Region NGO staff and volunteers, provide work placement and other shared learning opportunities for NGO staff and volunteers as well as improve communication and collaboration between NGOs involved in HIV and STI prevention and care in the Pacific.

To date, ATFF has trained 32 members of 16 NGOs from the region. These countries are:

- Tonga
- Samoa
- Tuvalu
- Solomon Islands
- Vanuatu
- Kiribati
- Nauru
- Marshall Islands

Identifying NGOs has been done collaboratively by ATFF and regional organisations, for example, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), UNDP and respective national AIDS Committees through the Health Ministries. ATFF through this project works collaboratively with NGOs who are active in HIV service delivery or are willing to take on the challenge of HIV/AIDS and be part of the regional response.

ATFF has also worked with national NGOs within Fiji, providing work placement and shared learning opportunities for effective service delivery. This institutional strengthening has enabled NGO staff from Fiji and the region to further identify and develop a culture of meeting the challenge of HIV in their respective countries and the region as a whole. This unique opportunity has also presented learning opportunities between Fiji based participants and their Pacific counterparts.

Part of the 5 weeks RCB training enables representatives of regional NGOs to identify and develop culturally appropriate HIV activities that is implemented upon the participant's return to their respective countries. Hence many regional NGOs, today incorporate either the Peer Education or Community Education model into their service delivery initiatives. This skills building and activity development is sustained by the three weeks follow-up

visit to respective countries undertaken by ATFF staff in the capacity of nurturing and sustaining HIV activities, the role of the NGO and the trained individual themselves. To date, 30 of the 32 individuals trained under the RCB component have been extensively sourced as resource persons in their respective communities and are still actively involved in the HIV response. This includes the National Maritime Schools, other community based organisations and Medical establishments. RCB participants are also actively involved in the development of National Health, Economic Planning and Youth strategies.

5 RCB participants representing 4 countries, namely, Nauru, Kiribati, Tonga and Samoa, were also participants at the 1st Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS and STI Conference held in Nadi, Fiji in February 1999. Attending this conference, the first for all, proved to be a major empowerment experience in terms of their being allowed a platform whereby they could share their work experience and learn from relevant stakeholders at a regional gathering. They were also instrumental in the development of a Declaration of Pacific Youth presented at the conference highlighting the sexual health concerns of Pacific Youth.

The training of trainers component of the RCB project has enabled many regional participants to co-facilitate HIV education sessions in their own languages. This again is an empowering experience and allows for activity ownership whereby these skilled individuals are able to modify the training activities to allow for relevance and applicability to respective country settings.

The RCB training has also engaged representatives of regional organisations to share about their organisation's roles in the regional HIV initiative. This has presented a unique opportunity for networking and awareness as far as who is doing what. Agencies engaged in this exercise include:

- The Commonwealth Youth programme
- UNAIDS
- United Nations Development Program
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community
- Family Planning Australia
- Ministry of Health, Fiji.

ATFF also developed a draft Train the Trainer Manual which is based on the experiences of ATFF staff of working in the region as well as the experiences of Pacific NGO staff in understanding, translating and implementing these training formats in their respective communities. This manual used extensively during the RCB training both in Fiji and during follow up visits in respective Pacific countries has since been translated into three Pacific languages, namely, Tongan, Kiribati and pidgin in Vanuatu.

It is envisaged that these trained individuals, through sustained internal and external support will be further skilled to be advocates and trainers not only for their peers, but their respective organisations and more so on a national level. As communication is a major challenge in the Pacific and as a result of the geographical isolation of countries in the region, individuals are being skilled in developing better systems of communication. This includes basic computing and email skills. This will help overcome the current barrier of inaccessibility and unavailability of up to date HIV information.

This is another avenue to sustaining work in the region as this allows members of NGOs to keep in touch and source help, direction and encouragement when the need arises.

As the issue of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PWAs) in the Pacific is still surrounded by much discrimination and a silence taboo attitude in relation to an honest, meaningful dialogue, RCB participants have played an important role in advocating for PWAs in their respective communities. Based on their experiences at the Suva training and as a result of attending other regional meetings, the participants have been able to put a face to HIV by sharing the stories of positive people. They have also incorporated care and support activities into their workshop and awareness raising training. They have, with support at the local and national level, played an important role in creating awareness on the rights, dignity and respect owed to PWAs. With enhanced support and training, these members of regional NGOs have the ability to continue to positively impact their communities.

(From a AIDS Taskforce of Fiji Report)

ⁱ Source: Cole, 1996, pp 48-49

¹ The information in this summary is from the Preparatory Assistance Document of the RAS/97/304/1/01/31 Non-formal education project , from an internal UNDP document on the project and input from UNDP personnel.

ⁱⁱ From the agreed statement of the Pacific Seminar on Non-formal Education, Port Vila, Vanuatu, 13-15 October, 1999