

# New Zealand in the Pacific: Exporting Education, Some Trends and Consequences\*

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To examine New Zealand's official involvement in education in the Pacific means going back many decades; it relates to her proximity to Pacific countries and to relationships developed through political participation, trade and commerce; it involves numerous personnel on government contracts, missionaries and volunteers; it includes the large number of Pacific Islanders educated in New Zealand, many of whom are now leaders in their own countries.

New Zealand's colonial expansion into the Pacific began in 1901 when she assumed responsibility for the Cook Islands and Niue.\*\* Formal educational expansion followed, and a 1911 commission report and Act of Parliament in 1915 saw the Cook Islands administration take over from the missionaries the responsibility for education in that territory.<sup>1</sup> Education became free, secular and compulsory to age 14, and by 1922 eight government schools had been established in the Cook Islands. Teachers employed by the New Zealand Government became a presence in Western Samoa from 1914 when the territory was taken over from Germany, and increased in number after 1919 when New Zealand assumed responsibility under the League of Nations mandate. The final phase in New Zealand's territorial expansion saw Tokelau come under the New Zealand orbit in 1925, being administered through Western Samoa.

The year 1924 was highly significant for New Zealand's educational expansion in the Pacific as it saw the establishment of the Scheme of Co-

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\*\* Niue became a separate administration with its own resident commissioner and island council in 1904.

operation with Fiji,<sup>2</sup> then a British Colony. The scheme formalised a system by which increasing numbers of New Zealand teachers were 'exported' to the Pacific on formal government to government contracts. By 1941 New Zealand teachers recruited under such schemes were teaching in Fiji, Tonga and Pitcairn, as well as the Cook Islands, Niue and Western Samoa.

The period following the Second World War saw a major expansion of education in the Pacific, initially at primary level, latterly at secondary. The local supply of teachers was totally inadequate to cope with this expansion and New Zealand teachers, education officers and advisers, and teachers' college lecturers were much in demand. The peak years for recruitment were 1967-73, the high point being 1970 with 190 New Zealand teachers in nine countries recruited under formal government contract. Since then, as the supply of local teachers increased and local training improved, the need for importing teachers has declined, until today, only 31 New Zealand teachers on government contract are to be found in four Pacific Island countries. (See Table 1.)

The presence of New Zealand teachers meant the importation of New Zealand teaching methods, ideas, materials, resources and examinations. The proximity of New Zealand, the familiarity of teachers with both syllabi and examinations, the availability of scholarships and tertiary study in New Zealand were all major factors in the growth of New Zealand examinations in Pacific schools, both form 5 School Certificate (see Table 2) and form 6 University Entrance, and in the decline of the previously favoured Cambridge Overseas examinations. Annual inspection/advisory visits by officers of the New Zealand Education Department to New Zealand teachers, and Pacific Island schools' involvement in the New Zealand examination system, have ensured close adherence to and understanding of examination prescriptions and requirements, especially pertaining to practical and New Zealand core subject requirements. In recent years, insistence on the former has been a major factor in schools moving, albeit slowly, to a discovery/enquiry approach in science, whilst the latter has assisted in the widening of curricula and the recognition of art/craft, music, industrial arts, home economics, physical education and local culture.

However, any notion that the export of these aspects of the New Zealand

Table 1

Numbers of New Zealand teachers in Pacific Island countries on government to government contracts

	1925	1941	1949	1957	1967	1970	1973	1975	1977	1980	1983	1984	1985	1986
Fiji	17	19	43	77	76	91	75	29	6	1	1	-	-	-
Samoa	-	6	23	30	34	-	-	-	-	1+	1+	-	-	-
Tonga	-	1	5	5	11	-	10	6	5	3	3	3	3	3
Cook Is	-	6	13	18	36	36	30	33	28	28	24	21	22	20
Niue	-	1	1	4	19	16	16	15	11	8	5	6	6	7
Pitcairn	-	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kiribati														
(Gilbert Is)	-	-	-	2	2	3	3	8	2	2	-	-	-	-
Solomon Is	-	-	-	-	2	6	15	8	4	3	2	-	-	-
Vanuatu														
(N Hebrides)	-	-	-	-	2	7	11	9	4	2	2	-	-	-
Tokelau	-	-	-	-	-	6	6	6	-	1	2	2	1	-
Tuvalu														
(Ellice Is)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1+	1+	-	-	-
	17	34	88	137	183	190*	167*	125	61	51	42	33	33	31

\* includes vacancies

+ MFA aid experts

Table 2  
Pacific Island schools taking NZ School Certificate

	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1983	1984	1985	1986
Fiji	2	4	3	14	41	62	92	102	104	105	108
Samoa	1	2	3	5	10	12	15	19	18	18	19
Tonga	-	1	1	2	4	8	15	19	19	19	20
Cook Is.	-	-	1	1	1	1	8	8	8	8	8
Niue	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tuvalu	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1
(Ellice Is)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1
Kiribati	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	2	2
(Gilbert Is)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	2	2
	3	7	8	22	57	84	133	152	153	154	159

education system always proceeded smoothly, or in an uncomplicated manner, would be quite misleading. New Zealand's decision to select Samoan students for study in New Zealand by means of a competitive examination in 1945 provides one example of the potential or real clash of cultures which often underlay the educational exchanges. In that year, the New Zealand Prime Minister stated that at least twelve students should be sent immediately with the number being increased to twenty if suitably qualified pupils were available.<sup>3</sup> New Zealand would bear at least three quarters of the cost of the scheme so that it could "insist upon the students being selected solely on the grounds of competitive ability". The Prime Minister would not sanction the support of New Zealand for any scheme "based on other than ability".<sup>4</sup>

New Zealand's determination that selection should proceed along 'democratic' lines on the Western model was therefore obvious. But anticipation that the Samoans might have strong alternative views was immediately proved correct and local criticism of the New Zealand approach mounted. At a meeting in September 1944 the *Fono of Faipules* (Samoan parliament) decided that the twelve scholarships suggested by New Zealand should be reduced to six.<sup>5</sup> The reasons were clear. The selection should be made on the basis of families and districts, rather than simply by competitive examinations. The leader of the *Fono* asked that another examination be held because the first one had not been in accordance with Samoan custom.<sup>6</sup> Asked by the Administrator what basis he would use for selection, he replied that chiefly standing and rank should be taken into account as well as academic merit. Accused of not wanting to use modern selection methods, he told the Administrator that he should "stick to the dignity and custom of the country". The scholarship selection committee could maintain the Samoan constitution and customs if fourteen boys were selected from the following groups: three from the *Fautua* families; six from the *pule* of Savai'i (orators in the principal traditional political centres of Savai'i) and five from the chief orators and chiefly families of Upolu. Eventually, in the colonial setting, it was the New Zealand viewpoint, assisted by several younger and influential *matai*, which prevailed and twelve students were selected by examination to go to New Zealand in 1945. But we can see in this particular example the ingredients of a very real dilemma.

In the 1960s, the movement towards or attainment of political independence in South Pacific countries, the consequent desire for

national aspirations to be reflected in their education systems, the development of curricula in the region relating to the use of locally relevant sources and objectives, and a steady increase in the size and shape of form 5 school populations, led to a growing dissatisfaction with the system, and the emerging belief that Pacific Island students were disadvantaged in having to conform to an external educational system which took no account of their cultural background, differences and difficulties. For example, the eventual assumption of senior positions in the Department of Education by Samoans also eventually led to a more questioning attitude regarding the suitability of existing educational provisions within Samoa itself. The Director of Education, Dr Fanaafi Ma'ia'i, wrote in 1970 that:

the requirements of the New Zealand external examinations have come to dominate the Samoan educational system. It was found that the 'core' requirements of the N.Z. School Certificate have become mandatory not only in the lower forms of the secondary level but even as far down the system as the standards.<sup>7</sup>

There was also criticism of the fact that the sole full secondary school in the Cook Islands, Tereora College, was "a replica of a New Zealand secondary school and does not reflect sufficiently the community it serves".<sup>8</sup> In Tonga the "inappropriateness" of metropolitan curricula was noted.<sup>9</sup> The Curriculum Development Unit of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Pacific, based in Fiji, became active, and as the following passage demonstrates, critical:

The examinations at the end of the course (i.e. the New Zealand School Certificate and University Entrance Examinations and the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate Examination) are not geared to the background and needs of South Pacific pupils. They assume not only an idiomatic command of a wide range of lexical and structural items, but also an intimate knowledge of a vast number of concepts which are quite foreign to the South Pacific area (how, for example, can children in an area where the temperature never goes below 70°, be expected to know without being taught what part frost plays in the physical and emotional life of a British or New Zealand child?).<sup>10</sup>

However, a growing dialogue between New Zealand and Pacific Island countries on more suitable curricula and assessment developed,<sup>11</sup> during which the idea of introducing a form 5 regional examination controlled by a regional board, or of making the New Zealand examination prescrip-

tions/papers more relevant to Pacific Island candidates, was mooted. New Zealand responded in 1969 by offering to provide, as an interim measure, alternative school certificate papers in some subjects, an offer which was not immediately taken up as it was considered conflict might result with the forms 1-4 curriculum development work of the UNDP/UNESCO unit based in Suva. Four years later, in 1973, when the possibility of conflict had abated, New Zealand reiterated the offer to finance and develop alternative and more relevant school certificate prescriptions and examination papers for candidates in Pacific Island schools. Such examination papers were, however, to be equivalent in standard and value to New Zealand papers. So were born the South Pacific and Fiji Option School Certificate papers. Two years later, in 1975, Fiji candidates were presented for physical and biological science; 1976 saw the introduction of South Pacific Option papers in English, mathematics and science whilst South Pacific Option history and geography appeared a year later.

New Zealand looked on the exercise from the beginning as a training one, and involved local Pacific Island personnel in all aspects of the development, including the setting, marking and moderation of papers. (See Table 3.) Fiji accepted total responsibility for both physical and biological science, with the papers being restricted to that country's candidates. English, which originally had a significant portion of the paper in common with the New Zealand one (although using relevant local material) has gradually developed more recognition of the language testing needs of candidates from the Pacific Islands; the emphasis in history and geography has been placed on local content replacing that of New Zealand; in mathematics and science, changes made to the papers in the early years proved to be mainly cosmetic, and as such considered not to merit the continuance of separate papers in recent years. Suggestions from Pacific Island countries to introduce South Pacific Option papers in economic studies, agriculture and the vernacular were considered but not proceeded with, due mainly to a lack of direction from the interested countries. Success with the South Pacific Option papers at form 5 level led countries to request similar options at form 6 (University Entrance) level to which the Universities Entrance Board responded with an alternative English paper.

As countries gained independence, so regionalism tended to be replaced by nationalism and although the idea of a Regional Examination Board lingered, increasingly there grew the demand for a Board of Assessment to

assist countries in the training of local personnel in the development of suitable national prescriptions, assessment procedures and instruments, and national certificates. This concept became a reality in 1980 with the founding of the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment.

**Table 3**  
**Involvement of Island Personnel by Country (1975-80) South Pacific Option School Certificate Papers**

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
<b>Biological Science</b>						
Asst Chief Examiner	F	F	F	F	F	F
Moderator	F	F	F	F	F	F
<b>Physical Science</b>						
Asst Chief Examiner	F	F	F	F	F	F
Moderator	F	F	F	F	F	F
<b>English</b>						
Asst Chief Examiner				F	F	F
Moderator		WS	WS	-	T	T
<b>Mathematics</b>						
Moderator		F	F	F	F	F
<b>Science</b>						
Moderator		T	T	T	T	T
<b>History</b>						
Asst Chief Examiner			F	F	F	F
Moderator			F	-	T	-
<b>Geography</b>						
Asst Chief Examiner			CI	CI	-	-
Moderator			F	F	F	F

F : Fiji  
 WS : Western Samoa  
 T : Tonga  
 CI : Cook Islands

Although New Zealand emphasised constantly the temporary nature of the South Pacific Option papers, the announcement in the early 1980s that funding would cease at the end of 1985 came as something of a shock to participating countries which, even with the establishment of the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment, had made little progress

towards developing their own curricula or assessment procedures. An extension was sought; New Zealand agreed, advising that the South Pacific Option School Certificate papers would be withdrawn finally in 1987, but subsequently deferred to 1988. Towards the end of 1985 the demise of the New Zealand University Entrance examination at form 6 level was announced and the New Zealand Universities Entrance Board advised that it was prepared to continue temporary assistance to Pacific Island countries by providing an examination of similar standing for the years 1986-1988 only.

Suddenly, planning for the educational future of Pacific Island countries - senior secondary curricula, assessment, and national certificates — became a necessity, not just something to be talked about. To date, Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa, which provide 96 percent of the approximately 10,000 South Pacific School Certificate candidates, have produced plans which will become a reality from 1987 onwards. What are these plans? How are these countries coming to grips with developing suitable curricula and assessment procedures? Now that they have the opportunity to localise education, to give prominence to indigenous languages and culture and to introduce relevant subjects, what are they doing?

The Fijian Ministry of Education, faced with the realities of the marketplace, with urban drift and unemployment, with a strongly academic oriented education seen as alienating pupils from rural life and local culture, and a growing feeling that Fiji students are presently, and have been for many years, 'over-examined' (a necessity no doubt in times of rising rolls and teacher shortage but now not so pressing), has decreed that it will withdraw from the New Zealand School Certificate programme at the end of 1987 and put forward its last candidates for the form 6 examination (previously UE) in 1988. As from then secondary pupils in Fiji schools will be presented, firstly in form 4, for the Fiji Junior Certificate (as at present); and then, in form 6 for the Fiji Senior Leaving Certificate (to be awarded initially in 1989).

Compulsory subjects for all third and fourth form pupils and for the Fiji Junior Certificate examination are to be English, mathematics, basic science and social science, so giving a broader base and moving away from the previously often preferred pattern of separate subjects with its inherent academic bias — chemistry, physics, biology, history and geography.

Pupils are then to select an additional three subjects from at least two of the following groups:

- B home economics, typing, woodwork, metalwork, technical drawing, accounting;
- C typing, accounting, economic studies;
- D Fijian, Hindi, Urdu, Chinese, etc.

This development gives greater worth and standing to practical subjects and recognises cultural differences. Furthermore a compulsory 'core' subject time allocation is set down for art/craft, physical education and music.

Pupils returning to school for forms 5 and 6, will be asked to select for study five subjects (including English) leading to the award of the Fiji Senior Leaving Certificate. The subjects to be offered include English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, accounting, economic studies, history, geography, technical drawing, woodwork, metalwork, clothing and textiles, food and nutrition, agriculture, secretarial studies, Fijian, Hindi and Urdu, with equal recognition being accorded to both academic and non-academic subjects.

An area of education in Fiji into which New Zealand has put funding but not expertise is that of the Multicraft Centres — Fiji's response since the mid 1970s to the problem of its early school leavers. Established now in some thirty schools, in rural, semi-urban and urban areas, the multicraft programme aims to provide school leavers with:

- skills needed for self-employment in rural areas, these relating particularly to farming and the establishment of cottage industries;
- skills required for the implementation of local rural development plans, both economic and social;
- an appreciation of the value of customs and traditional ways in meeting village and community needs.<sup>12</sup>

Centres offer a two-year course which includes English, basic mathematics, business studies, and cultural studies, in addition to the basic vocational skills training, which may be in agriculture, building, light engineering, fishing or home economics (including local crafts). The areas of vocational skills training selected for centres depend on where the centre is placed. While trainees in rurally based schools tend on leaving to

become self-employed, those in the semi-urban or urban areas tend to seek paid employment or use the training as a stepping stone to apprentice training or entry to more advanced courses at technical institutes.

In recent years, the Tongan Ministry of Education has talked much about 'Tonganizing' education, but little happened until 1984 when with the setting up of a National Examination Planning Committee, Tonga began the move away from New Zealand dominance of its secondary school system. Tonga has indicated that by 1988 it will be independent of New Zealand examinations by which time it is anticipated that the Tongan Secondary Certificate, to replace both the Tonga Higher Leaving Certificate and the New Zealand School Certificate, will be in place. It is intended that for the Tongan Secondary Certificate at level three of secondary education (currently form 5) the following subjects will be compulsory: English language, Tongan studies, mathematics, science, geography and history. In addition, pupils will select two optional subjects from accounting, typing, shorthand, economics, commercial studies, home economics, industrial arts, agricultural science, music, art. Tonga has proposed to New Zealand, which is facilitating the move with advice and training, the introduction of a Tongan certificate in 1987 based partly on New Zealand papers and partly on local ones, the latter to be agricultural science, industrial arts, home economics and Tongan studies. New Zealand has agreed to this proposal and marks (grades) received by candidates in the New Zealand papers (including South Pacific Option papers) will be forwarded to Tonga for inclusion on the Tongan certificate. Tonga expects to be able to provide examination papers in all subjects in 1988 and pupils who succeed in the Tongan Secondary Certificate will be able to return to school for a further two years to pursue higher studies.

The other Pacific Island country which, to date, has taken up the challenge of 'going it alone' and nationalising its secondary education system in the near future is Western Samoa. At present it too anticipates being free of the New Zealand system by the end of 1988, by which time it is anticipated that all pupils in years 9, 10 or 11 (currently forms 3, 4 and 5) will be undertaking in junior secondary schools a general broad curriculum. This is being developed with assistance from Australia, and will offer language arts, mathematical studies, social education, environmental education, practical arts, and expressive arts for the Samoa Junior Secondary Certificate examination. Success in this examination will permit entry to years 12 and 13 culminating in the award of the Samoa Senior Secondary

Certificate. Beginning in 1987, Western Samoa intends to introduce an eight year system of primary education (from 5 years of age), followed by three years junior secondary and two years senior secondary. All pupils at primary and junior secondary level will attend their nearest primary and junior secondary schools, i.e. it will over the next few years do away with the 'elite' English speaking schools — the town schools of Apia Primary (years 1-6) and Leifi'ifi Intermediate (years 7-8 — and things Samoan will be given prominence. To achieve its aim of all pupils attending the nearest junior secondary school, forms 3, 4 and 5 (years 9, 10 and 11) will be done away with progressively as from 1987 at the country's three government full secondary schools — Samoa College, Avele College and Vaipouli College. Samoa and Vaipouli Colleges as from 1990 will become senior colleges catering for students in years 12 and 13 only.

The Cook Islands and Niue, where pupils are New Zealand citizens, have decided for the present to remain part of the New Zealand system, reverting from South Pacific Options to New Zealand School Certificate papers after 1988. The Cook Islands have suggested that consideration be given to their retaining English (South Pacific Option) but assessing it internally; enquiries are also being made into their producing local papers in selected subjects e.g. workshop technology, which could be internally assessed and included on a New Zealand certificate. At sixth form level, both the Cook Islands and Niue are participating in the internally assessed New Zealand Sixth Form Certificate and working towards introducing subjects with a high practical or local cultural bias.

As in Western Samoa, changes in primary education in the Cook Islands and Niue are presently being contemplated, again with the aim of integrating the present few 'elite' English speaking primary schools into the normal primary system of the country where the language base is the vernacular and where the local curriculum and not that of New Zealand is paramount.

Tuvalu with only one full secondary school, and Kiribati with two, have said little to date about their plans for the future of their secondary schools. The problem of recognition of national certificates if they stand alone is greater for them than for the larger Pacific countries and they may well decide to continue to align themselves with New Zealand at least at form 5 level, although Tuvalu, which already presents pupils in form 4 for the Fiji Junior Certificate could well decide to move away from New Zealand and seek to prepare its senior students for the proposed Fiji Senior Leaving Certificate.

The small atoll country of Tokelau stands alone. While still a dependency of New Zealand, it has a large measure of self-government which includes responsibilities for areas such as the control and development of education, health and public works. Until the early 1970s the three schools, which were then primary only, had New Zealand principals who tended to treat the schools as New Zealand schools, implementing New Zealand curricula, using New Zealand methods and materials. Each year, the best primary students were selected for further education in New Zealand; most of them have never returned to Tokelau.

The late 1970s saw New Zealand faced with implementing the recommendation of the 1976 United Nations Mission that secondary education should be available to all in the atoll schools of Tokelau. But what kind of secondary education? Education for life on the atoll, education for life in New Zealand (with continuing free access, many will emigrate) or education to allow the able pupils to pursue senior secondary/tertiary studies abroad? A visitor to the three schools today would find a compromise, but a compromise which with its emphasis on Tokelauan may well be disadvantaging those few selected for scholarship studies, and those who may emigrate to New Zealand.

This dilemma of "education for what?" underlies much of education in the Pacific and raises other significant dichotomies for future educational development. For example, while the thrust has been for educational independence, continuing dependence is the likely pattern; while educational development and innovation have been fostered, the continuing pattern is likely to be dominated by an academic, conservative focus; while the plea for relevance is widespread the continuing reality appears to be metropolitan standards and models; while the hope is for the expansion of educational opportunity and equity the continuing pattern is likely to be one of selectivity and competition for scarce places, with the growing problem of urban youth educated to a certain level but unable to progress further.

Education in Pacific Island secondary schools is on the move; new school systems and curricula are being introduced, hopefully to erase some of the problems of the past, reflect more the culture and ethnic diversity of the people, have some relevance to the lifestyle and needs of the countries concerned and allow students to reach their potential — academically, practically and culturally. How well they succeed remains to be seen.

Indeed, when one examines the various societies and their expectations of education, the entrenched conservatism that exists, and the economic pressures which demand selectivity, one is left with questions of whether it is realistic to expect rapid change in present educational models and how far these changes can progress.

#### Notes

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2. A.G. Hopkin, 'The Scheme of Co-operation between New Zealand and Fiji 1924-1972,' *NZ Journal of Educational Studies*, 8, 1, May 1973, 53-67.
3. Prime Minister to Administrator, Western Samoa, 29 May 1944, I.T. 13-8.
4. Ibid.
5. *Proceedings of the Fono*, 8 September 1944, p. 28.
6. Report of meeting between Administrator and Samoan leaders, 25 November 1944, I.T. 13-8.
7. *Annual Report*, Department of Education, Western Samoa, 1970, p. 1.
8. South Pacific Commission, *Third Regional Education Seminar*. Noumea, 1969, p. 60.
9. Ibid, p. 55.
10. UNDP, *Secondary School Curriculum Development Unit*. Suva, 1972, p. 12.
11. Information on the development of New Zealand's educational involvement in the Pacific and recent changes, in particular relating to examinations, is drawn from unpublished Department of Education papers and reports prepared by P.J. Beveridge, J.W.K. Clark, J.C. Irving and J.W.A. Strachan.
12. Ministry of Education, *Report on Multicraft Programme Evaluation*, Suva, 1982, p. 3.