



Non-formal education: *Pacific 2010* workshop

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The National Centre for Development Studies held a workshop on Non-formal Education in Vanuatu from 3–7 April 1995. Papers on Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu are available from the Centre. This shortened version of the paper presented by Pala Wari to the workshop provides an overview of formal and non-formal education in Papua New Guinea. Separate sections on vocational education and youth programs are taken from the papers of Arietta Kairey and Pani Tawaiyole.

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History of formal schooling

Formal schooling in Papua New Guinea began after European settlement in 1873 and was the responsibility of missions which focused on teaching basic literacy. In the 1950s there were two independent education systems, one under the administration and the other under religious organisations. The Papua New Guinea Education Ordinance (1970) and Papua New Guinea Teaching Service Commission (1971) outlined the objectives of the National Education System, bringing about many changes.

After the country gained independence in 1975, the Organic Law on Provincial Government decentralised government, with the result that provinces theoretically had almost full responsibility for planning, financing, staffing and maintaining community schools, vocational centres and provincial high schools. The national Department of Education, however, kept some control over the distribution of national funds. Curriculum in community, provincial and national high schools, including time allocation, syllabus content, assessment and inspections is a national responsibility. Control over national high

schools, technical colleges and primary teachers colleges is also a national function.

The formal education system is not meeting needs

The present formal school system provides six years of primary education: Grade 1 to 6, followed by six years of secondary: Grades 7 to 12. Starting with a very broad base in Grade 1, the system progressively and severely narrows to almost nothing at the top. Serious wastage or 'voluntary dropout' is evident between primary and secondary levels, leading to very low participation rates at the upper-secondary level.

Primary education

In 1994, 26 per cent of the 7 to 12 year old population were not attending primary school, while at the secondary school level 82 per cent of the 13 to 16 year olds were out of school (Table 1).

Gross enrolment rates have grown slowly: at the primary level from 62.6 per cent in 1983 to 74.1 per cent in 1994, and at the secondary level from 13.4 per cent to 19.6 per cent over the same period. In 1994 there were 496,745 primary pupils of which 44 per cent were girls, comparing well with the male:female distribution of 52:48 in the

population at large. In spite of the gains of the last 10 years, however, it is clear that the level of educational attainment of the Papua New Guinea population remains extremely low. Attrition from primary education has increased in the last half of the decade, meaning that many of Papua New Guinea's young people will remain functionally illiterate.

Secondary education

The central issue after Grade 6 is access. Though the number of provincial high schools has increased in the past decade, the number of Grade 6 pupils has also increased greatly. This has led to a smaller percentage of Grade 6 children being selected for high school. In 1994, about 40 per cent or 18,000 Grade 6 leavers were admitted to high schools. Only about one in 10 Grade 10 students progresses to Grade 11 (Table 2). One of the weakest spots in the education system has been the inability to increase the pool of Grade 11 and 12 pupils: the current output from Grade 12 is approximately 1,000 pupils per year.

School leaver problems

The percentage of school leavers has increased over the years, and female leavers at both primary and secondary levels are becoming significant compared to male leavers.

Opportunities for school leavers to gain employment skills outside of the formal education situation are very limited, especially in urban areas. This is partly because employers are beginning to demand a minimum of Grade 12 education. While the number of Grade 10 leavers has been increasing, the number of jobs available in the formal sector has been decreasing. Only 14 per cent of young people are engaged in the formal sector and most school leavers will continue to be

Table 1 **Population out of school by education sector, 1994**

	Total in age group	In school (number)	Out of school (%)
Primary	662,618	496,745	26
Secondary	369,147	66,949	82

Source: Wari, Pala, 1995. Pacific 2010: Non-formal Education in Melanesia: Papua New Guinea Non-formal Education, paper presented to Workshop on Non-formal Education, Vanuatu, 3-7 April.

disappointed in their efforts to find jobs. A recent high school tracer study by the Department of Education showed that most leavers move to urban centres hoping to find jobs, and failing that, remain in urban areas thus contributing to law and order problems.

In rural villages there is some evidence of leavers returning to rural areas and getting involved in youth organisations. Most of these organisations, however, tend to focus on social activities such as sports, religious groups and community activities rather than serving employment needs. Only 50 per cent of our arable land is under cultivation and of this, only 25 per cent is being used effectively. There is still much to be done in our country to develop our communities and to achieve real economic independence. Young people with knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to this development have a clear responsibility to do so. For them to fail to do so is to fail themselves, their people and their country. A lot of the students' time and their parents' and governments' money has been invested in providing them with an education. This must, therefore, not be wasted.

A brief history of non-formal education

Non-formal education has had a long and unfortunate history in Papua New Guinea. It has generally been strongest when carried out by non-government organisations. For example, the work of Yangpela Didiman, sponsored by the Lutheran church, has a good reputation throughout Papua New Guinea and overseas. The Summer Institute for Linguistics has promoted rural development and adult literacy for three decades in all parts of Papua New Guinea. Many other missions have had strong programs for youth, women and adults.

Before independence, non-formal education was under the adult education division in the national Department of Education. After independence it was decided that vocational centres should be involved in village-based training. A project to transform vocational centres into village development centres was piloted between 1977 and 1982. It was evaluated and found to be a good idea whose time had not yet come, as most vocational centre instructors were not trained for or prepared to devote their lives to extension work in villages.

Table 2 Primary and secondary school leavers, 1984-94 (per cent)

	Grade 6 leavers			Grade 10 leavers		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1984/85	63.1	71.0	66.4	89.6	93.1	90.8
1985/86	60.3	69.4	64.3	89.7	93.0	90.9
1986/87	61.4	71.6	65.8	90.1	93.6	91.4
1987/88	59.9	65.8	62.5	90.3	93.9	91.6
1988/89	61.6	68.6	64.7	89.1	92.4	90.3
1989/90	63.2	70.1	66.2	88.9	92.4	90.2
1990/91	62.7	66.7	64.5	88.8	93.5	90.7
1991/92	58.1	64.1	60.7	89.3	93.6	91.0
1992/93	60.1	64.6	62.0	89.8	93.7	91.4
1993/94	58.7	64.2	57.8	89.4	93.5	91.1

Source: Department of Education Enrolment and Staffing Statistics, 1984-93.

Youth development training

Pani Tawaiyole

Human resources...constitute the ultimate basis for wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production; human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organisations, and carry forward national development. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilise them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else (Harbison 1973).

The National Youth Programme in Papua New Guinea began in 1978 with the formation of the Interim Youth Council whose job was to draft a constitution and determine membership of a permanent National Youth Council, and propose a national program for youth.

In 1980, the National Executive Council approved funds for the National Youth Movement Programme, which aimed to encourage youth to participate in the economic, social, political, cultural and spiritual life of their communities and the nation. Currently, the National Youth Programme is coordinated by the National Youth Division within the Department of Religion, Home Affairs and Youth.

In the provinces, youth programs are administered by the Youth Section within the Division of Social Services. Provincial youth officers are responsible for conducting workshops and seminars, supervising youth activities at the provincial level, maintaining records of youth-related projects, screening project proposals from youth groups, liaising with various agencies and compiling information to be reported to the national office.

A number of problems have been identified with provincial youth programs.

- Many provincial youth officers are poorly equipped to carry out all the functions.
- Youth councils often lack experience and practical knowledge.
- Community youth councils are often crippled because they are forced to operate without much provincial support.
- Funds allocated to provinces for youth work are often mis-managed and do not reach the communities where programs have been started.

Non-government organisations have played a significant role in programs for youth, often filling in the gaps left by national and provincial governments. Although there is often less financial support for non-government organisation-sponsored youth programs, it is worth noting that they are often more successful than better-funded government programs.

In 1981 the Department of Education published *The Right to Learn: the neglect of non-formal education*. For a moment it looked like there might be a non-formal education revival. But the interest generated in non-formal education was rarely followed through with any real commitment or allocation of resources.

Non-formal education programs

Pre-primary and primary

Many communities provide pre-school experience through locally organised and maintained *tokples* centres, outside of the formal school system. It is estimated that between 25,000 to 50,000 children attend these centres before entering Grade 1.

Adult literacy

Adult literacy programs are of three types: basic literacy, fluency and transfer. In most of the non-governmental organisation sponsored programs, adults learn to read and write in their own language and later transfer their literacy skills to a second language. Non-government organisation programs also help people literate in a national language become literate in their local language.

Government involvement in adult literacy has come about as a response to the growing demand for literacy programs from women's groups and others at the community and provincial level. Much of this interest was a result of the many exciting literacy programs for children springing up around the country since 1980. Various activities and programs were promoted as part of International Literacy Year in 1990.

The basic, though usually unstated, goal of most adult literacy programs reflects the guiding principles of the national constitution—to educate adults to be better equipped to understand the

changes occurring around them and to be active participants in development.

Although the strategies and methods used vary according to the sponsoring organisations, most literacy programs in Papua New Guinea have been community based, with communities themselves deciding which age group will learn to read, selecting teachers, providing many of the resources for the program, and deciding the content or subject matter. The role of government is to assist but not control these efforts. Assistance comes in the form of training in teaching methods and materials production, and financial grants for purchase of materials for local materials production centres.

While the development of adult literacy in Papua New Guinea has been exciting, it has not been without problems. There is still a shortage of funds. The Literacy Awareness Secretariat has not enjoyed cooperation from every group. A beginning has been made, however, and from the interest exhibited by community, provincial, non-government organisation and national leaders, it is clear that the program will continue to expand.

Libraries and non-formal education

The establishment and maintenance of libraries is an important aspect of improving overall education and literacy levels. Unfortunately, over the past 12 years, the number of public libraries in the provinces has been reduced from 23 to 15. Presently, five provinces have no public library at all. Generally, provincial public libraries are poorly and irregularly funded, inadequately staffed and little used.

A coordinated approach is needed if library services are to be available to more of Papua New Guinea's population. Resource centres are needed for each community. These centres would

Vocational training centres

Arietta Kairey

The Department of Education provides for non-formal education through the Vocational Training Program. Vocational training centres were to enrol school leavers from Grade 6 to Grade 10. Between 1986 and 1994, demand has increased substantially for enrolment in vocational training programs, with enrolments for both males and females nearly doubling over the period (Table 3). Males comprised nearly three-quarters of the 1994 enrolments (Table 3).

The policy of mixing students of various levels of previous education, however, does not work particularly well, since many of those who leave school after Grade 6 have a lower level of ability. As a result, they comprise only about 15 per cent of vocational students. Another drawback is that the recognition given to the qualifications obtained in the vocational centres is not as high as that given to credentials gained through the technical colleges and apprenticeship training.

The government initiative of passing the National Training Council Act, which is in place and in the process of implementation, will improve the training provided by vocational centres (both government and non-government run), provided the programs and organisations are registered with the National Training Council.

An initiative pertaining to the vocational training centres is in process between the governments of Papua New Guinea and Germany. The project seeks to identify ways and approaches to develop a uniform curriculum for all of these centres. There is a need, however, to compile accurate statistics showing how many young people graduate from vocational centres, government and non-government. At present each organisation is responsible for its own data.

Table 3 Vocational centre enrolments, 1986-94

	Male	Female	Total
1986	4,787	1,647	6,434
1990	3,741	1,792	5,533
1994	7,710	3,522	11,232

Source: Department of Education and Enrolment and Staffing Statistics.

- provide books and materials for students involved in non-formal education programs
- provide study space for students and office space for tutors
- support and distribute materials to rural libraries and resource centres
- serve as a central resource point for literacy materials.
- provide community libraries which would be supplied by provincial and national libraries
- provide mobile libraries which would be housed in vehicles and would be taken to central road locations
- facilitate country lending through which clients who are unable to receive materials from provincial libraries could get them from national libraries
- provide referral services through which librarians could help clients get materials that are not stocked in one particular library
- provide deposit collections which would be deposited in clinics, community centres, churches or other places where community members could exchange books.

Women and non-formal education

Until 1980, women's activities and programs were conducted by a number of different government and non-government organisations, with little coordination and no policy guidelines. In 1983, the Division of Women's Affairs was created and given the task of developing a National Women's Development Programme and National Women's Policy. The aims of the program were to promote women's full participation in the social, economic, cultural, spiritual and political life of the country. A major objective was to establish a strong network of women's organisations at all levels.

In 1990, the government endorsed the National Women's Policy, and the National Office was responsible for ensuring that new programs reflected policy objectives. Many of the projects and programs involve non-formal education for women, and must be coordinated with other non-formal education activities. (See Avalos, this issue for a detailed discussion of women in development.)

Improving non-formal education

Non-formal education has an immense and indispensable role to play in a country where only 74 per cent of the children between 7 and 12 years of age go to school, and only one-third of those who finish Grade 6 continue their education.

Despite its importance, since independence government support for non-formal education has been mostly sporadic and disorganised. Many non-government organisations have been sponsoring non-formal education programs to meet their various objectives.

There is now a growing consensus in Papua New Guinea that the time is ripe to do something different with non-formal education. There is recognition that all departments and divisions are meant to be

involved in non-formal education—non-formal education is not just the 'property' of the Department of Education. Primary Industry, Health, Commerce, Religious, Home Affairs and Youth are all meant to run training programs to benefit the out of school majority.

The need for cooperation between non-government organisations and provincial and national governments is obvious. The spirit for cooperation is high. The opportunities for cooperation are abundant and the international resources to support this cooperation are available. Cooperative efforts between national and provincial governments, non-government organisations and communities will help to ensure success of non-formal education in this country.

One suggestion that offers promise for a nationwide, coordinated non-formal education effort is that a National Council of Non-formal Education be established. This council would be responsible for coordinating non-formal education programs other than literacy, and would work in close cooperation with the National Literacy and Awareness Council. A Non-formal Education Secretariat would be established similar to the Literacy and Awareness Secretariat. The Secretariat would liaise closely with provincial officers to assist provinces and communities in developing their own non-formal education programs, and to coordinate activities between provinces. The Council would

- channel funds from overseas and government to local programs
- coordinate cooperation between government departments in non-formal education
- provide training for non-formal education field workers
- raise additional funds for non-formal education from new sources.

A second suggestion is that vocational centres become District Non-formal Education Centres and increase their outreach to

- provide information and awareness services (books, cassettes and radios)
- train teachers and produce materials for literacy classes, and conduct literacy classes when appropriate
 - serve as a district library with materials in national and local languages
 - provide meeting and sports facilities for youth, Council and women's groups
 - assist community groups in preparing proposals for aid from outside agencies
 - facilitate and coordinate training courses for community members in health, agriculture, voting and other services
- provide facilities and support to non-government organisations operating in the district.

Officers responsible for non-formal education in the provinces must have adequate supervision and pre and in-service training. Furthermore, the government must be willing to allocate funds to set up the centres and then maintain them.

People in local communities want to be active participants in the development of this country. Many of the resources that are needed are already at hand. What is needed now is commitment on the part of the national government, and the willingness on the part of provincial governments and non-government organisations to work together in achieving this common goal.

Reference

Harbison, F., 1973. *Human Resources as the Wealth of Nations*, Oxford University Press, New York.