

***The Role of Schools in the Enhancement of Social Tolerance
and Cohesion : A Case Study Research Project in the Pacific
Region***

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PROMOTING SOCIAL TOLERANCE AND COHESION THROUGH EDUCATION

The Meanings of Community in a Global Context

This paper reports on a recent research project about the key role schools can play in promoting social tolerance. The findings of the research highlight the importance of seeking community stakeholder views about the purposes of schooling, particularly in the context of rapidly changing global forces. The paper posits the view that if the educational experience does not support those aspects of a culture the inhabitants believe to be most important, it does not contribute to social cohesion. Communities adjusting to 'modern' forces, including those in Australia, increasingly question the benefits of education when there is uneven access to schooling, inequitable distribution of funding and when the curriculum focus of education reflects only those measurable outcomes which support the hegemonic party's view of the economic well-being of the country. In such circumstances, citizens are uncertain how to use education to cohere their culture and society.

Signs of stress and symptoms of a deficit in well-being, are not hard to find in communities around the world, including Australia. Signs such as increasing poverty for some, unemployment, the widening gap between rich and poor, relationship breakdown and a ready predilection to blame others who are different for a loss of efficacy are intertwined with other indicators of social stress and distress: substance abuse, gambling, loss of self-esteem, a decline in volunteerism and a disenchantment with, and alienation from, mainstream socio-political traditions. These events have made it clear that the well-being and stability of a democracy depends not only on the justice of its basic structures but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens (IEA Civic Education Study, 2000).

Since concepts such as equal or fair distribution of the resources of a community and access to decision-making processes lay at the heart of what living in a democracy means, it is not surprising that feelings of frustration, alienation and exclusion are especially strong in countries professing to be democracies.

As socially relevant institutions, schools are themselves social environments in which people experience a broad range of interactions. Education and training are processes of preparation, for work, but also, more generally, for taking one's place in society. It is worth considering how such preparation could possibly be effective in the absence of any systematic deliberation of the social issues.

In summary, both local and global forces appear to be polarising community aspirations. The strength of the forces are not the same in all countries, nor are the same forces operating in the same ways in all countries. The current stresses and tensions can be expressed as a cluster of bipolar concepts, such as appear in the listing which follows. Once identified and named by countries, these bi-polar concepts represent some of the tensions that require resolution. Resolution lies somewhere along the spectrum represented by the two end-points.

Bi-Polar Concepts and Forces at Work in Emerging Democracies

- individual autonomy vs collective interdependence
- individual authority vs external authority
- individual autonomy vs collective interdependence
- individual responsibility vs mutual responsibility
- freedom of choice vs mutual constraint
- self-interest vs mutual interest
- private vs public

- quality vs equality
- competition vs cohesion
- small government vs big government

Additional factors which impact on community aspirations and values, both positively and negatively, are derived from global mega-trends. (Kennedy, 1998) The situation has moved beyond the point of deciding whether countries should embrace or reject globalisation, or to what extent, and in what ways, nations are prepared to accommodate its impact. For some members of communities who see education's key function as the promotion of the return to more 'traditional' national values, what to do with global influences is an almost-insuperable problem.

Globalisation has the potential to both create further social divisions in communities and also to enhance social harmony and the acceptance of diversity. The consideration of national aspirations and/or the development of national goals of education (or a Preamble to a Republican Constitution!) is about the nature of the world people see for children who are about to begin schooling. Its significance becomes more evident in the face of the issue of mega-trends. It is our experience that members of communities in the South Pacific Region are fully aware of aspects of globalisation which daily impacted on their lives. Communities in the most remote locations also can engage in this discussion, for they too have been touched by these mega-trends. The following list of mega-trends is not meant to be exhaustive, but form a productive beginning to community discussions.

- Globalisation and its impact on local economies and social values.
- The ability of global media conglomerates to infiltrate traditional local forms of communication.
- The use of information technologies.
- Attacks on traditional values/customs/religions by global trends.
- Youth unemployment resulting from, for example, the demographic trend of urban living.
- The global impact and spread of AIDS
- Social alienation and social injustices resulting, for example, from urban living
- The rapidity of change and the need for flexibility and change managers
- Confusion about identities, for example, resulting from changes in national boundaries and immigration.
- Environmental pressures and challenges, sometimes resulting from the impact of multi-national companies on local communities.

With attending school being the most common experience for young people, the challenge for schools in this rapidly changing global environment is to accurately and sensitively reflect the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical aspirations of communities and not just specific groups within the community. Bureaucrats and politicians, in our view, have largely dominated the formulation of images of society to guide policy making. In the current climate this has taken the form of an outcomes-based school curriculum in which only easily quantifiable outcomes are valued and issues such as social justice and tolerance are largely ignored as immeasurable.

Meanings of Citizenship and the Strengthening of Diverse Communities

Definitions about civics and citizenship education and more broadly, curriculum, are problematic and contestable. They are value-laden constructs. Some writers argue that any accepted definition is the construct of the particular dominant hegemonic group. We need to be able and willing to deconstruct the values and assumptions embedded in curriculum and

policy documents in order to effectively audit and clarify the directions we wish to take. Knowing where we have come from is useful in knowing where we would like to go.

A common element in many definitions of the 'good citizen' and illustrated by recent research in Australia (Prior, 1999) is wide community support for what can be called the 'social concerns' element of citizenship. Characteristics of this dimension of citizenship include concern for others, respect for diversity and social tolerance.

Within a sociological approach to citizenship the first thing emphasised about citizenship is that it controls access to the scarce resources of society and hence this allocative function can be a source of profound conflict in societies, specifically over citizenship membership criteria. Any benchmark of citizenship would therefore have to include some notion of egalitarian openness to difference and otherness, of social harmony and tolerance, as essential ingredients of a democratic system. Who gets citizenship clearly indicates the prevailing formal criteria of inclusion/exclusion within a community and how these resources are allocated and administered largely determines the economic and social fate of individuals and families. (Turner, 1997)

Another component of Turner's discussion of citizenship is the idea of a political community as the basis of citizenship. This political community is typically the nation-state. When individuals become citizens they enter into a set of institutions that confers upon them legal status and obligations, they acquire an identity, they are socialised into civic virtues, and they also become members of a political community with a particular territory and history. Since nations are imaginary communities, and since nations are created, sometimes by outsiders, the communal basis of citizenship has to be constantly renewed within the collective memory by such events as festivals and public ceremonies. Until a nation defines itself and has a coherent and agreed vision(s) of its past and of its future, its education system will reflect this waywardness and lack of direction. Education systems can contribute to national identity formation, and once community definition of national identity is established, schools need to reflect it.

A Case Study Research Project

In late 2000 a research team, centred at Deakin University Faculty of Education's Consultancy and Development Unit and the Australian Council for Educational Research, both located in Melbourne, Australia, was commissioned by the World Bank to undertake a baseline study of community thinking about the concept of the 'good citizen' and also current education practices in the area of citizenship education. The two case study locations selected were Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. In particular, the study was to focus on the role schools could play in promoting social harmony and cohesion in the two Pacific region countries. This project, *Promoting Social Tolerance and Cohesion through Education*, came at a time when several countries in the Pacific region were engaged in intermittent bitter inter-racial tensions, which resulted in loss of life, the destruction of property, the collapse of the norms of a civil democratic society and the partial or general collapse of their economies (1).

The two selected case-study countries in the Pacific region were clearly societies in transition. In the discussions with stakeholders, finding a balance between the maintenance of traditional, local village community values, and more recent broader national aspirations, crystallised as the chief stakeholder concern. This concern about how to find the optimum balance impacted on their views of the role schools might play in their communities.

(1) This paper is a discussion of this project. Three reports were written for the World Bank. The first focused on stakeholders' perceptions of the role schools were currently playing in

enhancing social cohesion and citizenship.. The second report focused on the extent to which current policy, curricula and school operations enhanced citizenship. A major outcome of the project was the focus of the third report, the development of an educational framework for consideration by both the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and other countries in the Pacific region. All three reports are available from the authors on request.

This project builds on the rationale that education systems can play a crucial role in the process of nation building. Educational action can strengthen democratic processes, present constructive and optimistic responses to diversity and promote social harmony. The key outcome of the project was to develop an educational policy framework for the promotion of social cohesion and democratic participation in schools. To achieve social justice in education there is a need to move towards more just practices which ensure more equal outcomes across targeted disadvantaged groups. Appropriate educational policy and pedagogy become issues for creating a more inclusive curriculum. This project was predicated on the belief that asking stakeholders their views about policy and pedagogy and the role schools can play in enhancing social tolerance and 'good citizenship' is the critical starting point for a more inclusive and relevant curriculum.

The project was not simply about trying to work out what kind of knowledge, skills and values are needed if communities are to actively contribute to shaping their own futures. Fostering a personal sense of belonging to a local community is a critical role of schools. Unless attention is also paid in the curriculum and pedagogy to the health of their own and other communities, and to the larger context in which they all exist, the fragmentation of society will continue at a rapid rate.

In brief the project methodology involved eight strategies:

- Collection of data from three different island locations in each of the two Pacific countries.
- Interviews with community stakeholders seeking their views about cultural disjunction, citizenship, ethnic conflict and the role education can play in enhancing social harmony and the acceptance of diversity.
- Interviews with school-based practitioner stakeholders seeking their views on the extent to which schools current policies and practices enhance social harmony and citizenship.
- Observation of school practices in three locations in each country.
- Analysis of curriculum materials, policy documents and student writings.
- Utilization of Prior's 'Six Dimensions of Citizenship' to codify the data.
- Convening two reflective workshops with stakeholders, one in each country.
- Convening two meetings, one in each country, to brief key stakeholders on the Educational Framework, arising out of the three reports submitted to the World Bank during the project.

In the course of this project, the researchers interviewed over 200 stakeholders, analysed all curriculum materials available from both systems, schools and community organisations, read 110 student essays and visited over 40 primary, secondary and other schools.

The research team was very fortunate in both the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in having access to a wide range of stakeholders with interests in schooling. The definition of a 'stakeholder' was taken very broadly. The first fieldwork visits concentrated on non-school stakeholders, including village chiefs, officials from NGOs, museum professionals, Ministry of Education officials, and staff from tertiary institutions. This approach had the advantage of developing a broad-brush picture of the social/cultural context in the two countries. It also

allowed for the initial establishment of networks of interested stakeholders in the wide community.

During the second series of fieldwork visits the focus was on interviewing stakeholders within specific school communities, including teachers, students, parents and principals. The selection of school-based stakeholders was governed by a number of local factors, including availability, and was restricted in both countries to school stakeholders from three locations.

To clarify the focus of the interviews and to ensure consistency of approach, the members of the research team developed two common interview schedules to be used as frameworks for stakeholder interviews.

One schedule was developed for use with non-school stakeholders, the other for use within school communities, for stakeholders including teachers, students and parents.

All interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the participant, and anonymity was offered. The time given to the interviews varied but on average the typical discussion lasted for about one hour.

Codifying the Data collected from Stakeholders : Prior's Dimensions of Citizenship

This research used Prior's (1999) model of citizenship as a framework for both coding the views of stakeholders about the role of schools in promoting social tolerance and in deconstructing the discourse in curriculum documents. This model is also useful in that it encompassed and cohered the various characteristics of a 'good citizen' as outlined in the Terms of Reference for this project, for example, promoting respect and dialogue between cultures, strengthening democratic processes and supporting community participation.

Prior identified six dimensions of citizenship. These dimensions are listed below with an exemplar stakeholder quote collected and coded for this dimension in the course of the project.

Dimension 1: Civic knowledge - for example, understandings about political organizations, decision making processes, institutions, legal requirements.

If we want our children to show tolerance and to live in peace with people from other areas... they must know something about both their own traditions and customs, and then, that of others.

(After school meeting with 15 parents in one of the Pacific Island countries)

Dimension 2: A sense of personal identity - for example, a feeling of self-worth, belonging efficacy, resilience.

We need to keep everything going. We believe in giving them tasks and for them to problem solve. The objective is to give skills, leadership, and decision-making experiences. We give them opportunities to be individuals and to be creative.

(Principal, junior secondary school.)

Dimension 3: A sense of community - for example, locating oneself within a community(s), some perhaps imagined communities.

You can't expect respect from students, if members of parliament do not act responsibly. We are not a community if they are not working together.

(Year 11 student speaking at a school meeting)

Dimension 4: Adoption of a code of civil behaviours - for example, civil and ethical behaviour, concern for the welfare of others.

I believe that it is the respect shown by each individual towards each other is the only tool that we can use to bind people together... Peace is something that we can achieve through the efforts of tolerance, forgiveness, mutual understanding of differences.

(A Form 3 student, writing for a newspaper essay writing competition)

Dimension 5: An informed and empathetic response to social issues - for example, environmental issues, social justice, equality and equity.

The schools should include peace curriculum... Programmes that will help the people about the importance of working together and building a better community through inductive teaching, learning self decision-making and through drama or social activities...

(A Form 3 student, writing for a newspaper essay writing competition)

Dimension 6: A skilled disposition to take social action - for example, community service, active participation in community affairs.

In my classes, especially in forms 4 and 5, I try to encourage student responsibility for their own learning. I expect my students to have opinions about current events. I think I can do this as well as getting good exam results... No, I don't think many other teachers in this school take this approach.

(Teacher of Social Studies at a secondary school)

The strategy adopted by the researchers was to overlay these six dimensions of citizenship as a framework for coding the collected data. The focus of the project was the extent of synergy in the goals of schooling in achieving social harmony and citizenship between the Ministries of Education (policy makers), the implementers (teachers), the receivers (students) and community (parents and other interested stakeholders).

In this study, the opportunities to observe informal student social learning was often limited by the formalities of the visits to schools. The common school-based interview schedule developed by the research team primarily explored aspects of this informal social learning and the hidden curriculum. Observations were limited to three locations in each of the Solomon Islands and in Vanuatu. In both case study countries, Ministry of Education officials generously gave their time to organise a series of visits to a range of schools in the three different locations. Generally in each school it was the Principal or teacher(s) of Social Studies who participated in the discussions. However on some occasions a member of the school's Board of Governors, parents and students were also interviewed. The visiting schedule developed by local authorities did not allow for extended visitations, but on average approximately three hours was spent in each school. The amount of data collected

during each visit varied. On some occasions the researchers were invited to talk to all teachers in the school. On other occasions it was with selected teachers. On yet other occasions the researchers had free rein of the school and could observe many classes in action and were invited to conduct impromptu lessons. Classroom activities were not tape-recorded.

The prime focus in the review of school operations through the perceptions of school stakeholders was to collect data of what happened or what the nation says ought to happen, to promote the positive social development of young people in schools. The assumption underlying this precept is that there is a common understanding, shared by politicians, administrators, social and community leaders, teachers and parents, of what constitutes 'positive social development' of a nation's youth. If countries have a set of stated specific 'Goals of Schooling', such matters would certainly be part of what such a document reveals about what the nation intends for its junior (and later senior/adult) citizens. The absence of such a charter means that, for example, any 'intention' to inculcate spiritual, moral or behavioural values can get buried in the detail of the ordinances, syllabuses, teachers' guides.

Many stakeholders in schools - teachers and principals - were at pains to point out that school experience and syllabuses for mainstream primary and secondary students did not give a full educational picture in the area of social learning.

They argued that principled values, attitudes and behaviours (D:3) are first inculcated in the home, the village and the wider community (and to some extent directly by the churches). Overwhelmingly, these school-based stakeholders viewed the current policies and practices in social learning in schools as being mostly dominated by foreign curriculum which mostly emphasised western traditions. Teachers in both countries were critical of the content of their curriculum, in terms of its minimal local content and the Euro-centredness of much of which is prescribed. Teachers who wanted to address social tolerance and related issues asserted they had to adapt what they had in the official documents. Civic knowledge (D:1) was valued if it was addressing traditional cultural practices, while there was an acceptance of cultural diversity as a means of expressing collective village and/or island identity (D: 2, 3) While some teachers expressed dismay at the passivity of their students, there was little understanding or valuing of student initiated social action.(D: 6). This view was often reported in terms of cultural traditions of respect for those in authority.

Teachers supported curriculum renewal especially in social education. A key issue for them in promoting social harmony and good citizenship was the total lack of teaching and learning materials about the cultural diversities of each of the provinces. The argument was often made by teachers that students often lacked a detailed understanding of their own island culture and that teachers who taught in provinces not of their own background, also lacked knowledge and teaching materials about the cultural practices of their school community. The teachers were not surprised at their students' lack of interest in the cultures of other provinces given students had not been encouraged to learn about their own traditional cultural customs and practices.

Where the aim of a school was to prepare children for life after school, global issues were not deemed to be as important as curriculum documents might aver. Some teachers and administrators were concerned with the development of students as citizens, but few in fact saw this as a central aim of the present school curriculum. Social Science teachers, especially secondary, sometimes felt marginalised by the prevailing attitudes in schools, and felt their subject to have reduced status mostly because of examination-directed learning.

Generally schooled-based stakeholders considered the examination system in which Grade 6 and year 9 students sat for externally set exams as a 'given', and were unable to conceptualise other forms of measurement of student performance. At the same time they considered the current examination system and the consequent high drop out rate, or as it is also called 'push-out' rate, was a serious impediment to enhancing cultural diversity, social tolerance, and democratic processes.

Some teachers and principals expressed support for the development of their students as citizens, but few saw this as the central aim of the school curriculum. The most common argument was that assisting students to pass the examinations was what schools were mostly about. This view was often expressed in tones of despair, suggesting that many practitioners want change. The financial and political reality in both countries is that the majority of students cannot continue on at school after grade 6. The social consequences of this are significant.

Visits to schools revealed that practitioners, both principals and teachers, were uncertain about appropriate school and classroom pedagogies to promote social learning. At the school level, for example, few opportunities appeared to be given to students to demonstrate civic initiatives. The practice of student leadership positions was generally reported by practitioners in the context of assisting teachers to enforce school rules. At the classroom level, for example, teachers, particularly in secondary schools, appeared uncertain about giving students responsibility for aspects of their own learning.

The culture in the school had a major impact on the capacity, and preparedness, of staff to step outside the models of 'real knowledge' as defined by the exam questions or by a minimalist reading of the syllabi. Whilst most practitioners professed great interest in the issues of social coherence and the future of the nation, they did not allow it to impinge on their practices. They maintained they could not afford to because of the examinations and the school ethos would not support such an approach.

Schools were generally very undemocratically organised, with most students having little chance to develop or practice empathy or leadership, except of the most moribund nature. Having to be in charge of things (such as achieving silence in the classroom) or for the disciplining of others is not sufficiently akin to being responsible for oneself, to be a useful learning experience. Schools which have boarders should be able to create communities which are vibrant and self-managing, and there appeared to be few of those.

Stakeholders within the education bureaucracy were mostly totally overwhelmed by the daily requirements and demands of keeping the system going. It was rare for them to engage in discussions about goals and visions and while some discussions revealed concerns about student social learning, the hierarchical structure of the Ministries of Education gave few opportunities for individual initiatives and collective responsibilities. Stakeholders in the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education acknowledged what the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education called, 'putting out bushfires' as the current approach to educational planning. In other words, the specific issues of the day, for example, trying to ensure that teachers were paid, took most of their energies

Stakeholder Concerns:

The stakeholders interviewed were representative of the general community, the education systems and classroom practitioners. Despite the fact that the two Pacific countries in the study had significantly different colonial and recent histories, and both possessed culturally-diverse communities, the similarities of the stakeholder's concerns were striking.

The following list of concerns was widely supported in both countries.

- Maintenance and strengthening of cultural traditions
- Enhancement of what it means to be a citizen
- Development of vocational and rural work skills
- Development of a national languages policy
- Increase in literacy skills
- Equitable distribution of funding to education across the nation
- Rewriting of curriculum to suit local priorities

When seeking from the stakeholders the values which might underpin the National Goals and the role of schools which stakeholders thought schools had in enhancing social harmony, the following were consistently identified.

- **Social justice** (Education as a means of sharing the 'commonwealth')
- **Access** (Education for ALL students, regardless of location and financial capacity)
- **Equity** (For all students in all age groups and between genders)
- **Participation** (Inclusion in decision-making, for all stakeholders: students, teachers, the community, Ministry officials)

- **Human rights** (All policy to be supportive of the UN Declaration of Rights of the Child)

In order to identify the priorities a country may need to set in its national goals, the three focus questions that need to be addressed in the discourse were characterised as being:

1. What sort of *world* do we see children entering into the 21st century?
2. What will *students* need to be able to do, to know and to value?
3. What will *schools* need to be like to cater for the responses to questions 1 & 2?

Researchers found that few stakeholders were in the habit of asking these questions... but they could when prompted. Their responses, for their local context, were consistently found to be:

- Supporting cultural traditions
- Enhancing ethical and spiritual behaviours
- Enhancing bodies of knowledge as currently outlined in school curriculum
- Developing skills and competencies related to employment
- Assisting young people to be good citizens
- Promoting social cohesion

These were regarded by researchers as precursors to National Goals.

Analysis of documents

The positioning of educational goals, such as the promotion of social tolerance and good citizenship in the operations of schools, is apparent in both the formal curriculum and the hidden implicit curriculum. It may appear in curriculum documents, and to this extent the research team was able to analyse both the nature of the social learning and evaluate the values and assumptions underpinning it.

Sometimes overarching aims or objectives for teaching a given unit or sequence of instruction, or for a program generally, are stated in a curriculum document. But even then it

is often hard to find out how such aims will or might come to life in classroom or playground. School operations, as expressed through the curriculum, is essentially about the future. The educational process, and specifically the curriculum, is both a personal and social construct. Curriculum therefore has different meanings attached to it (Brady & Kennedy, 1999). For stakeholders within the education sector it is tempting to consider curriculum as some sort of private arrangement between teacher and student. At one level in the classroom it probably can be described as this sort of private contractual arrangement. However the nature of curriculum is much broader than a classroom context. It is a part of the social, political and economic structures of society. In seeking to understand the school curriculum the task was also to understand the complex forces and patterns that characterise the operation of society. The educational process and curriculum therefore are representative of the goals, aspirations and values of society. The degree of representativeness varied. This study was to establish the degree to which school values incorporated community values in relation to social cohesion.

During the fieldwork to the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, numerous documents were collected. These took many forms:

- Ministry of Education curriculum documents
- Ministry of Education policy documents
- Teacher training materials
- Teacher-adapted curriculum materials
- Non-school materials
- Student writings (Solomon Islands only)

The current political uncertainties in both countries, combined with the heavy reliance on outside funding, have not assisted policy makers and practitioners in their quest for curriculum renewal. In the context of uncertainties in national leadership, it is not surprising that there were no policy documents outlining national goals of schooling upon which to plan future directions. The uncertainties associated with outside funding support, which hang over both countries, have resulted in an inability to plan long term and in an unequal distribution of existing funds to the various provinces. As a generalisation, schools are grossly under-funded for the very basic necessities for teaching and learning. However, a common comment by practitioners in both countries and supported by the observation of the researchers, was that some favoured schools are much better resourced than others. When governments allow such a situation to occur, regardless of their motives, they feed social disharmony and undermine the public perception of social justice in government policy and the public service bureaucracy.

The curriculum documents included course outlines, teachers' handbooks and course specific students' resources. A full set of curriculum/syllabus documents was not available in either country, due to a number of reasons. In the Solomon Islands, for example, no one, including the Curriculum Development Centre, was able to provide a copy of the Form 1-3 Social Studies syllabus, although one was finally discovered in a rural school. The focus of the analysis of these curriculum documents was to assess the extent to which, on paper at least, they promoted positive social development for young people.

There was a severe slippage between the expectations of curriculum policy makers and the expectations of teachers (and parents). This may be a somewhat unfair comment on the curriculum writers, for the reality is, in both countries, there are currently no social education curriculum writers. The documents analysed for this study mostly were written by outside contract curriculum writers over 10 years ago and since this time only minor revisions have been made.

The research team was unable to collect many policy documents as both countries are currently engaged in developing strategic education plans. Mostly these were not as yet complete and while we were able to discuss the plans with key Ministry of Education officials, we were unable to offer many insights into the policies. The timing of this study was apt for education policy-makers in the two countries, as it came at the very time both administrations were considering future policy directions.

It was very fortuitous that the timing of this study in the Solomon Islands occurred when the Honiara newspaper, the *Solomon Star*, initiated a secondary student writing competition. The topic was: *To bring peace and harmony back to our happy isles*. The research team considered this key stakeholder data to be of enormous value. Approximately 500 essays were received from all provinces in the Solomon Islands and the research team analysed 110 of these essays for evidence of young peoples' views about promoting social tolerance and cohesion.

Syllabii provided little encouragement and the exams little incentive to address social issues (D: 5) or adopt teaching strategies which might allow a divergence of views to be expressed in classrooms. There was little explicit examination of attitudes such as tolerance, or respect for and celebration of difference. Nor was there any suggestion of how such attitudes might be enacted on a daily basis and what they might mean in practice.(D: 6)

The most noticeable characteristic of the documentation accessed during this review process was the ad hoc development of the curriculum over a number of years. There was a strong sense of documents being written by different people, and with different agendas. There was no sense of a sequential and incremental framework. As with the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills in any other area of learning, the enhancement of citizenship education needs a structured and developmental framework to be integral to the curriculum and to lead to effective learning.

The syllabus review demonstrated that the mere writing of a syllabus, cannot enable an observer or a participant to know what is being taught. Only the construction of a curriculum, where the pedagogy must be outlined and where it be as much the focus of the document as the content, can enable teachers to know what are the desired learning outcomes, and how possibly she or he may reach them.

Visits to a wide range of schools and the reading of curriculum documents revealed a great disparity between what might be called the 'good intentions approach' of practitioners and the realities of what actually operated in schools.

The Schema for an Education Policy Framework

The researchers developed a Schema to describe and model policy formation. The Schema for a Policy Framework is a conceptual map. It also indicates the stages that need to be undertaken in developing an education policy framework to enhance social harmony. Each component of the Schema was examined, in Report 3 of the project, in terms of its focus, its underlying principles and values, its relationship to the national goals of education and its contribution to the achievement of a policy framework to enhance social harmony and effective citizenship. The Schema also names each agent/audience/participant to be engaged in the development of policy. Taken together these component parts constitute the Schema.

At the core of the Schema are the National Goals and the Priorities selected and agreed upon by the nation. Immediately surrounding those National Goals, and directly impinging upon them, are the Values, Assumptions and Rationale for the National Goals. Also directly

impinging on the National Goals are the Global Mega-trends. Beyond those two circles of core activities are a range of agents/audiences/participants that both act upon and are impacted by the National Goals. They are additional areas of policy formation, and these policies are the ways in which the National Goals can be implemented.

Outside the core of the Schema, but impinging upon it, are the areas of Teaching and Learning Practices (comprising Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment), and the area of Operational and Governance Policy (comprising Community, Schools and Administration). Students are the other key stakeholders with whom consultation must occur in the development of policy, especially in this an education enhancing social harmony and tolerance. Students are a separate category in this Schema-connected to all aspects of the Schema-and not to be overlooked, but fully engaged in the decision-making processes of policy development.

Report 3 articulated the Schema, and introduced the processes in which any participants developing a national policy framework, need to engage. The initial policy work must always be the articulation of Goals (and Priorities thereafter). In writing about the implementation of the framework, writers, of necessity, can only deal with one aspect of the Schema at a time. However, in the real world of action, the policy-formation needs to involve all parts of the Schema at once. All the components of the Schema are inter-related and cannot be considered in isolation.

Three Priorities/Strategies to Enhance Social Tolerance.

With the reference points of the stakeholder concerns and using the model of the Schema, the researchers selected three Proposed National Priorities for Social Cohesion, in the Policy Framework for the Promotion of Social Cohesion and Democratic Participation in Schools. The selected priorities are whole-system strategies designed to achieve the designated (stakeholder) national goals.

Priority One: A National Youth Strategy Plan

Formal education is but one component of a youth policy. In both countries few policies addressed the issues facing the many young people who were unable to continue schooling beyond the primary school level. Some of the non-school issues for youth are high youth unemployment, rapid population growth, and a growing attraction of the 'bright lights' of city life for youth.

The enhancement of social harmony in a community relies on a commitment to the well-being of all sections of the community. Any educational policy framework needs to be encompassed within a broader national youth policy framework. Discussions indicated young people in these countries (as in the world over) value and desire physical, aesthetic, spiritual and social, as well as cognitive experiences at school. At present formal schooling in the case-study countries only offers some of these experiences.

Some examples of components currently generally missing from schooling, and which would enhance social harmony and national youth well-being within a broad national youth policy framework include:

- Opportunities for student decision-making experiences in all learning contexts, for example, Student Representative Councils, membership on education committees.
- Development of a National Youth Parliament system
- Inclusion of youth issues, however controversial, within all educational experiences.
- Community Service as a component of all educational experiences

- A national sport and physical education policy
- Rural education training centres linked to Provincial Educational Offices and driven by local demand and including work experience.
- The provision of vocational training both within existing schools and outside in specialist institutions. Development of an articulated vocational education system based on generic vocational competencies, and firmly focussed on realistic choices of vocation.

Priority Two: A Review of Curriculum

Throughout Report 3 it was argued that curriculum is socially constructed, and thus should clearly represent the current goals and future hopes of communities. Stakeholders in both countries highlighted aspects of social learning as the component of curriculum they most urgently wanted amended. It was not suggested this should be the only area of curriculum to be reviewed, but rather that social learning should be both an area of study in itself and an over-arching perspective across the whole school curriculum. Through the social education program, especially one that seeks to enhance Social Tolerance, Cohesion and Harmony, students should progressively achieve an understanding of the following broad understandings about society:

- The way societies are grouped and structured
- The ways different societies have of fulfilling basic needs
- The ways decisions are made and enacted; and the influences on decision-making
- The ways widely-held beliefs and values influence societies and groups within societies
- The ways in which people interact and the purposes for which they interact
- The ways in which there are elements of change and continuity in human affairs
- The ways in which there is interaction between natural and social settings
- The ways in which different societies maintain and pass on their culture

Priority Three: A Devolution of Policy Making Processes

Argument was mounted in Report 3 for the need for changes in administrative structure and procedures in the case-study countries to promote a more public acceptance and modelling of desired social learning outcomes. The following strategies are indicative of the principles required in the process of moving from a centralised policy-making process to a school-based framework.

- Change the name of the Ministry of Education to the Department of Education Employment, Training, & Youth Affairs (DEETYA), so enhancing a unified national system of education and approach to youth affairs
- Enhance transparency and accountability in education via school effectiveness reviews
- Establish performance reviews of administrative staff
- School principals be charged with establishing local school policy in conjunction with local school communities.
- Key principals given responsibility to oversee a cluster of principals in the processes of school policy formulation.
- Provincial Education Offices (PEOs) be charged with much greater responsibility in cluster professional development of teachers and in initiating community participation in education.
- The Curriculum Development Centres (CDCs) be restructured to include a representative board of management - to include representatives of Non Government Organisations (NGOs), Teachers' College, PEO, teachers,

administration - so that the production of curriculum materials reflect the aspirations and values of the community.

- Creation of a Distance Education section within the CDC to facilitate more equitable access to educational resources.
- Leading teachers be given time release to develop curriculum materials which reflect assessment processes and pedagogies embedded in national goals of education..
- Teachers' College management be linked to the CDC, Ministry of Education administration, NGOs and be developed as centres of excellence in pedagogies to enhance social learning.
- Examination papers examinations be developed by teachers with time release, with a leading teacher to ensure each paper accurately reflects national goals of education.

Conclusions

It became clear very early in this project, that the promotion of social harmony and cohesion were sub-set elements of much broader issues which cohere under the banner of 'national goals'. By discussing what it meant to be 'socially educated' and to be a 'good citizen', participants in both countries revealed many insights into what they thought it means to be an individual and what it means to be a member of a community, or of multiple communities. Issues of national identity quickly arose. Issues of the acceptance of diversity of cultures arose. And these issues were embedded in both individual and collective memories, which on occasions betrayed prejudice and expressions of stereotypes. Current education policies and school practices are not addressing these tensions. In this climate of transition, citizenship education is in need of revitalisation.

The core purpose of schooling is to provide a quality education that ensures that students are well prepared for life after school. All school processes should ultimately be supportive of improving student learning for their future and that of their society.

In societies in transition and adjustment, the perception that justice, honesty and fairness can prevail is critical for supporting and sustaining an education system which includes citizenship education programs. Curriculum renewal is required in this context of transience, and it will need to include a broad vision of the 'better future world' with values and assumptions clearly articulated. The challenge, for policy makers in the context of a society in transition, is how to actively engage communities in framing policy in a climate of popular passivity and low social participation. Reduction in centralised bureaucratic systems of the western model would contribute to real consultation.

Participation in all of society's processes will be crucial to the citizenary. The cost of ignorance, indifference, apathy and antipathy to participating in the processes of enhancing the well-being of all members of communities manifests itself not only in social terms but also in financial terms when the infrastructure (again both socially and financially) of the community breaks down. The Pacific region has seen several recent examples of this. Community breakdown results from the sense of marginalisation created by ignorance, apathy or antipathy or disengagement. Society needs to value community engagement and to support citizenship education which will teach young people how to participate. This study suggests that communities want this citizenship education in schools.

The challenge for societies is to reach agreement on what it is that enables people to work and live side by side for the common good while accommodating, if not celebrating, each others' differences. The challenge for schools is to prepare young people who cannot only survive in a mega-trend world, but who can constantly transform it, so that it is locally viable, personally meaningful and socially beneficial.

Effective democracy comes about as a result of a balance being maintained between the views of majorities and minorities. Since all these, often diverging, views cannot, at one time, be incorporated in policy or government programs, tolerance of this divergence of opinion must be practised. Tolerance is thus important to the maintenance of a relatively calm, productive democratic society. Citizenship education's role in a democratic society is more than that of contributing to social harmony and cohesion. It is one of reconciliation. An education system that sees its goal as assisting young people to grow into competent, democratic citizens understands the complexities and problematics of the process and understands the need for reconciling the views of all stakeholders.

Many factors influence the likelihood that young people will achieve desirable social goals. Some factors have to do with the individual, the family and the wider community, and these factors may be completely outside the school's sphere of influence. However many stakeholders, though rarely senior Ministry officials, in this study, thought these factors should be within the schools' ambit. This could be achieved by better engaging the community in school policy and practice.

A positive and supportive school environment is the main way schools have of enhancing the social development of young people. But this supportive environment can only come about when all stakeholders - policy makers, administrators, principals, teachers, students and parents work together towards common goals.

The educational framework, developed as the conclusion to this project, focussed on national goals, values and behaviours at the community level. Stakeholders wanted education to actively promote social as well as other outcomes. They wanted it to provide models and opportunities for students to learn values and understandings which would reflect their community antecedents and appropriate processes for achieving for themselves and their community positive futures.

Throughout the *Promoting Social Tolerance and Cohesion Through Education* project there were clear demonstrations of the need for, and by most stakeholders an acceptance of the value of, community-based discussions of national educational goals. This research established that there was a synergy between the values, understandings and goals supported by most stakeholders. In addition, it established that so-called 'western views' of democracy and of citizenship, at least those in the dimensions of the Prior model, were mostly in accord with local cultures, values, customs and aspirations. Such concepts were culturally-congruent and they were endorsed by stakeholders.

Citizenship education is needed to extend these social and educational conversations. From these conversations, held at different levels of society, engaging different groups, will derive the clarification of the values and processes by which the inhabitants of the Pacific countries can engage in meaningful community-based processes. Indigenisation of the decision-making processes and engagement of the populace, in and outside schools, will ensure social cohesion be learned, modelled and valued. Only with such ownership of social policy by the populace can local democracies serve their communities.

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