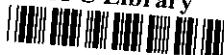




INFORMATION CIRCULAR

Date

SPC Library



41454

Bibliothèque CPS

Classification

Library reference copy

Serial No.

Not for loan

HINDS

Education

53

August 1973

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC : NO. 1

Regional Co-operation in Education Recommended by S.P.C. Meeting

A meeting sponsored by the South Pacific Commission in the Cook Islands has made recommendations likely to have lasting significance for education in the region, if adopted by the South Pacific Conference and Session which will be discussing them later in the year.

The Meeting, which took place from 28 May to 1 June, was attended by representatives of seven Pacific countries and territories. It was convened by the Commission in accordance with recommendations made by the Fifth Regional Education Seminar. The Cook Islands was chosen as the venue in response to an invitation from the Cook Islands Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Tupui Ariki Henry.

During their discussions, participants reaffirmed the belief that each country and territory has the right to develop its own curriculum for the majority of its people, based upon national needs, while specialised curricula to meet the needs of a few to go on for higher education should be built upon this basic foundation. The Meeting also recognised the need for a substantial number of people to be trained to fill basic roles, such as stenographers, agriculturalists and technicians.

To satisfy all of these requirements and basic principles, the Meeting recommended that the Pacific Board for Educational Co-operation be established. The Board would provide the means for fostering inter-regional co-operation in the field of education, while preserving national identity and promoting international recognition of educational standards set by each territory and approved by the Board. It was suggested that each of the countries and territories within the scope of the South Pacific Commission, as well as metropolitan powers with interests in the region, be invited to nominate a representative to the Board. An Executive Secretary of high calibre and extensive experience in the region would be responsible for implementation of the Board's programme of work.

(604/73)

17799

The Board would receive requests for assistance in educational development from member countries and territories, and, through the Executive Secretary, would establish assistance teams which would give technical and professional help in particular educational areas, such as teacher training and development of curricula. The teams would largely work within the requesting country or territory, and would be responsible for reporting to the Board any additional action which they considered necessary.

If the recommendations of the Meeting are adopted, and the Pacific Board for Educational Co-operation becomes a reality, its effects on education could be significant indeed. The Board would promote a wider use of training facilities already available within the region; assist in the development of curricula suited to the needs of the individual countries and territories; foster the spirit of regional co-operation already much in evidence at the Meeting which proposed its establishment and, most important of all, perhaps, to a rapidly-developing region such as the Pacific, contribute to a fuller and more rational use of the region's most valuable asset: its young people.

Meeting of the Directors of Education at the University
of the South Pacific on 27 April 1973

A meeting of the Directors of Education of the countries in the University of the South Pacific region was held on 27 April 1973 at the University of the South Pacific. After a wide-ranging discussion it emerged that all the parties present wished to see a South Pacific Examinations Board established, based on local syllabi and prescriptions. However, the Meeting recommended a gradual approach, drawing heavily on the expertise and skills already available in the New Zealand Department of Education.

As a consequence, the Meeting recommended that the establishment of a South Pacific Examinations Board be planned in several stages over an adequate period of time. The first stage would be an Interim Board comprising Directors of Education of the USP region, together with representatives from the University of the South Pacific, United Nations Development Programme Curriculum Unit, the New Zealand Department of Education, and such other persons as were agreed upon.

It was suggested that the main functions of the Board would be to provide prescriptions on which the New Zealand Department of Education could set examinations during the interim period. The Board would also request assistance in training regional examiners and would issue certificates entitled the "South Pacific School Certificate" or the "South Pacific University Entrance".

If the response of regional governments was overwhelmingly in support of these recommendations, it was agreed that steps should be taken for the recommended Board to meet as an Interim Board immediately after the meeting of the Executive Committee of Council of the University of the South Pacific at Honiara in early August 1973.

Curriculum Developments in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate

A small but very active unit centred on the British Solomons Training College is working on a variety of curriculum development schemes, and several secondary schools are trial units for basic science materials being produced by the United Nations Development Programme Curriculum Development Unit at the University of the South Pacific. Primary school science curriculum work is being undertaken at the Training College with the assistance of Dr H. Cannon, UNESCO/UNICEF Adviser on Science Teaching.

Guam Director of Education Suggests Period of Evaluation

A recent issue of Tuesday Topics, the weekly newsletter of the Guam Department of Education, notes that the Director of Education intends the 1973/74 school year to be a period of evaluation, with particular reference to curriculum, instruction and student performance. The Director lists some questions to which she would like answers; these questions may be of interest to Directors of Education in other territories; they are listed below:

- "1. Has the total school curriculum ever been evaluated with recommendations for improvement or discarding of ineffective programs?
2. Have new programs, especially experimental and pilot programs (not federal) been evaluated with recommendations to improve, strengthen or delete?
3. Does the system have a clear concise statement of goals and objectives?
4. Have these goals and objectives been translated into measurable objectives at the school and classroom level?
5. Are the teachers' talents and training being fully utilized or are they merely occupying a space in the system?

6. Do the principals have any clear standards as to what to expect in terms of teacher performance and pupil learning?
7. Do the principals have any clear-cut system or standards to use in evaluating teacher performance?
8. Are the teachers, upon employment, given direction as to the system's expectation in their performance and pupil achievement or are they left on their own?"

New Developments in Education in Nauru 1972/73

1. Nauru's Curriculum Branch

The Curriculum Branch was established in May 1972. Its original responsibilities included a survey of existing syllabuses; liaison through sub-committees with schools in Nauru; liaison with curriculum units in other parts of the Pacific region; and exchange of syllabuses and curriculum material with Departments of Education in other Pacific countries and territories.

By the end of 1972, guide subject syllabuses for the Secondary School Curriculum had been completed, and extended assistance was being given to Infant and Primary Schools, where it was felt the greatest problems lay.

The Curriculum Officers are currently working on the implementation of the official trial syllabuses, and their evaluation; preparing teacher-support materials; and assisting with teacher education programmes, as well as maintaining liaison with schools and overseas.

2. General Developments

Other developments in education in Nauru in the past year include the establishment of a Technical Education Centre, to train apprentices; the formation of a Teacher Education Committee; the enrolment of significant numbers of Nauruan teachers as external students of the Diploma of Education Course at the University of the South Pacific; the establishment of an Education Department Newsletter; and greater use of the Tate Oral English Syllabus.

Recent Educational Developments in Papua New Guinea

1. National Education System

Following recommendations made in 1969, Papua New Guinea now has a National Education System, which incorporates both church and government schools, and has decentralised education by creating district education boards and school boards of management. All teachers in the system are members of a national teaching service.

Within the system, the National Education Board, which advises the Government on overall educational policy, has representatives of the Government, of local government councils, of the community, of teachers, of churches and of tertiary education. The Director of Education is Chairman of the Board. The District Education Boards, which are advised by the National Education Board, are formed of similar representatives at District level, and are responsible for the implementation of policy and the planning and development of education in each of Papua New Guinea's eighteen Districts. The School Boards of Management represent the communities served by individual schools.

2. Curriculum and Curriculum Development - main features to March 1973

In general, Papua New Guinea is well into a phase in which courses of study are developed to suit specific needs in the country. Previous phases included the adoption of syllabi verbatim from elsewhere, and adaptation of syllabi from elsewhere. This present phase is fostered in part by strong departmental moves based on Papua New Guinea nationalism, the absence of examination needs other than those determined (for selection purposes) within the country, and the increased availability of resources during the latter sixties and early seventies - UNESCO and UNDP assistance, specialist staff within the Education Department, and assistance from other government departments and non-government agencies. It must be acknowledged, however, that much work continues to be done by ad hoc committees without the aid of full-time curriculum workers, and that lack of resources for implementation renders much good curriculum work ineffective.

3. Current Projects:

- (a) Three-Phase Primary Science has been developed and evaluated for all six years of Primary School. The implementation of the course is now well advanced, and an evaluation of Phase Three for evidence of cognitive gains has been commenced.

- (b) Other areas in the Primary School in which activity is presently underway are Mathematics, Health, Agriculture, Social Studies and a Class 1 programme to cope with the elimination of the preparatory class.
- (c) Secondary Social Science has been developed, trialled and revised, and is now taught in all Forms 1 and 2. The second stage of this extensively materials-supported integrated social science course is now being field tested - Form 3 - and brainstormed in preliminary trials for Form 4.
- (d) Secondary Science Project - a systematic programme of development, field-testing for evaluation, review and implementation is also underway in Secondary Science. This follows on the Three-Phase Primary Science project.
- (e) All other Secondary syllabuses are under review by committees at present, as it is expected they will be continuously.
- (f) Skulanka. Eighteen districts commenced a shoe-string budgeted, largely non-academic extension school for Standard 6 leavers who did not win a place in secondary school. A practical and village orientation is to be stressed.
- (g) A plan for a three-year post primary village self-help education scheme has been announced by the Minister and is currently under discussion. Like Skulanka, this is an attempt to bridge the gap for the school-leaver of 12+ years until maturity at 15+, at the same time stressing practical learning for village life.

The Teaching Methods and Materials Centre, University
of Papua New Guinea *

The main object of the Teaching Methods and Materials Centre (TMMC) is to assist all personnel engaged in teaching in Papua New Guinea, both in and out of schools. The Centre gives advice on particular teaching and classroom problems; it suggests addresses where free or cheap teaching material may be obtained; it advises on audio-visual and other classroom aids; and, within Papua New Guinea, it operates a lending service for teachers.

* Information extracted from Bulletin No 1, 1973, of the Curriculum Branch of the Papua New Guinea Department of Education.

All new material received by the Centre is reviewed to determine its suitability for Papua New Guinea. Much of the material held is too expensive for individual schools to purchase. By providing this material on loan (borrowers must return material after one month), the Centre is assisting Papua New Guinea teaching personnel to widen the scope of classroom activities. Among its resources the Centre has a wide range of material on Social Science.

Palauan History Development Project*

The Palauan History Development Project, in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, has recently published a small booklet of Palauan legends as part of the information on Palau history and culture which is currently being collected from local authorities. The eventual goal of the Project is to produce the first comprehensive and accurate account of Palau history and culture.

Palauan legends are not necessarily common knowledge in the community. Like other aspects of the culture, a specific legend is often entrusted to one man, a caretaker for certain clan and village traditions. He is responsible for explaining the legend, and his version may differ slightly from the form learned by other Palauans.

Since this is the first time that the legends of Palau have been researched and published by Palauans themselves, the task was not easy. Prime sources had to be identified and their information compared with that obtained from other sources. Palauan traditions are passed down orally and any information relating to culture had to be scrupulously checked.

The legends have now been translated into English in the belief that they may be of interest to people who do not speak Palauan. In the English version the legends have been clarified and certain concepts of Palauan culture explained.

Further information may be obtained from the Palau Community Action Agency.

* Information extracted from Bulletin No 1, 1973, of the Curriculum Branch of the Papua New Guinea Department of Education.

Sixth Regional Education Conference

Directors of Education are invited to note the likely dates of the Commission's Sixth Regional Education Conference. The Conference is scheduled to take place from 4 - 8 March 1974 at Honiara in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate.

Please assist!

Directors of Education are requested to continue providing information for the Circular on new developments in Education, particularly on such matters as:

- (a) curriculum and curriculum development activities;
- (b) new policies and developments in education;
- (c) changes in key personnel;
- (d) consultants working in the region or expected to be visiting the region.

In addition, Directors who have not yet forwarded suggestions for distribution of the Information Circular should do so as soon as possible.
