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FIJI
LIBRARY
ASSOCIATION
JOURNAL

Information Literacy

FIJI LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The Association was formed in 1972 to encourage and foster the development of libraries, librarianship, archives and archivists, and other associated activities within Fiji and the South Pacific.

FLA aims to unite all persons engaged or interested in library work, and to create awareness of the importance of libraries in society. The Association publishes a quarterly newsletter and a biannual journal, as well as a number of books in this field.

Meetings, workshops, National Library Week and the Biennial Convention are other Association activities:

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> The Secretary
> Fiji Library Association
> PO Box 2292
> Government Buildings
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Fiji Library Association
JOURNAL

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The *Fiji Library Association Journal* welcomes original contributions from members of the Association and others. Contributions about libraries, librarianship, informa-tion services, books and publishing in Fiji and the South Pacific are especially wel-come. News items, short features (up to 100 words), articles (up to 5,000 words) and book re-views should be typed on one side of paper only, and double spaced. Illustra-tions and back and white photographs may be included. Contributions should be sub-mitted clearly identifying the author's full name, position and institutional affiliation. Manuscripts may also be submitted on CD-ROMs in any word-processing format.

For bibliographic references, see *Notes to contributors*, available from the Associa-tion to assist contributors.

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Edited by
Paula Jones and Francis R. ALI

Fiji Library Association
JOURNAL

In this issue

EDITORIAL

After a ten year break, the Fiji Library Association Journal is now back in publication. The articles in this issue were to be published as two separate issues in 2000, but due to a number of reasons the journal was put on hold. We are now in a position to publish these back issues, and the articles are presented now.

As we move towards our future there is value in reviewing our past. Articles should be read in the context of the time in which they were written—they have not been updated to reflect more recent changes.

It is enlightening to read the issues raised in these articles, as in many cases the dilemmas we faced ten years ago continue to be barriers to progress. For those with more recent experience in the topics covered, such as the struggle for libraries in Tonga and elsewhere in the Pacific we need to consider what has changed. Clearly the issues are challenging—how can we make things easier for future generations?

Literacy issues in the Marshall Islands reflect similar issues in other Pacific countries, and Carol Curtis includes many suggestions for improvement. How many have been implemented, and how successful were these. There is great potential for more writing on this issue, and we encourage articles for future issues of our journal.

Recording our past means we can avoid issues in future, and Sam Kaina makes a compelling case for education for archivists and record keepers , but unfortunately this is still to be realised. Sin Joan Yee's article on a National Information Policy gives a framework for developing an information infrastructure for the Pacific to guide and the development of information resources, services and systems.

The issues faced by primary school libraries in Fiji in the late nineties continue to be major issues today, and this historical perspective by Mel Rainey has value to demonstrate how long these libraries have needed more support than they have actually received. Our challenge is to make this possible in future—it is only through all our efforts that change can be achieved.

Francis R. Ali
Editor

The Struggle for Libraries:
with Special Reference to Tonga and the Pacific Region

Judy Taligalu McFall-McCaffery

Introduction

Developing countries experience different levels of literacy, and according to Kaungamno (1984) therefore stages of library development. This is due to major factors in economic, political, social, cultural and religious developments. Furthermore a country's particular situation and history must be taken into account. Literacy for developing countries worldwide is a top priority issue and developing countries are clamoring to hopefully achieve the objective of the United Nation's of literacy for all by the year 2000. This is supported by the financial and technical assistance of UNESCO and developed countries. Libraries on the other hand do not feature in the literacy plans as significant community and education services, not given much support, and are mostly relegated to the bottom of Governments priority list. The crucial link in the chain between literacy and libraries is not given due attention and action, but merely 'lip service'. Linking literacy to library development is something that has to be done, but is always pushed to the background. There are always more important national issues like health services, education and other infrastructural developments that demand the very limited available financial and personnel resources. This attitude is prevalent amongst developing countries including Tonga.

Developing countries governments therefore attach high priority to literacy but low priority to libraries. Governments are eager to teach their people how to read and write, recognizing this will greatly assist in upgrading the level of the economy. However, they fail to provide people with suitable reading materials through libraries to maintain this reading ability. As Wright (1986) also correctly observed about Papua New Guinea, there is a lack of understanding at the decision making level about the importance and relationship between literacy and libraries, and how vital libraries are in perpetuating and fostering literacy. Developing countries are solely concerned with building their countries economically—the link between literacy and economic development is a well established phenomenon, for a country's economic level will depend on its peoples level of literacy.

What is Literacy?

Basically literacy means, the ability to be able to read and write, and in some cases to be able to do mathematical calculations. According to the Oxford Concise English Dictionary (1995), literacy means 'the ability to read and write.' In the same dictionary literate means 'able to read and write; educated.' This definition of literacy in the twentieth century is lacking as with the fast changing pace of science and technology, the mere ability to read and write and calculate is not sufficient to be able to cope in modern times. Present day literacy according to Lotherington-Woloszyn (1990), is 'not an indication of education, but a pre-requisite to education' as there is 'a complex set of competencies on which much of modern life is based, without which one is effectively disabled. She discussed three types of literacy; traditional literacy, functional literacy, and emergent literacy.

Briefly, traditional literacy assumes that merely teaching people reading and writing regardless of their differences in background and the literacy skill needs will solve society's problems. Functional literacy is supposed to be 'active and creative and empowers one to transform one's life and society into an economic and political success.' This assumes that everybody who is functionally literate i.e. able to read and write will be so empowered through at-

taining these skills that they will all pursue to transform and better their society.
 Emergent literacy, on the other hand, recognizes the importance of natural learning skills and acquired knowledge which one obtains from the home and surrounding environment, and incorporates this into the skills taught in schools 'for the pursuit and application of knowledge.' (Lotherington-Woloszyn, 1990). One also hears about computer literacy, scientific literacy, information literacy, and cultural literacy, etc. The twentieth century person has to be literacy competent in many fields of knowledge than they were a century ago.

Furthermore, people need to be 'empowered' with a multiplicity of literacy skills to significantly improve their standard of living, and to have a notable impact on society's economic, social and political development.

Being literate, therefore, is of great importance as it : (a) gives one the ability to read and write (and calculate); (b) improves and raises one's standard of life; and (c) contributes to society's economic development. Literacy equips people with skills and the knowledge of how to apply these skills in situations that affect their lives. Being able to understand and analyse different situations, opens up a vast number of options or opportunities to people, and the knowledge to choose the best solution or option to deal with that situation in the circumstances. The ability to do this provides people with opportunities to improve their standard of living, and make informed and independent decisions that directly influence their way of living. It naturally follows that if people's standard of living improves, the economy will also follow suit. Therefore, there is a direct link between a society's economic development and it's level of literacy as in the case of Japan. .

Four Problems Facing Literacy Rates in Developing Countries
Why then are developing countries slow to liberate their people from their bonds of illiteracy, if literacy is the key to economic betterment? There are many problems faced by developing countries in their literacy rates, as discussed by Rainey (1996). However I will discuss four which I feel are not only common to developing countries but especially to Tonga and the Pacific region. These are: (1) strong oral traditions; (ii) lack of local publishing offices and firms; (iii) insufficient reading materials for all levels, especially in the vernacular; and (iv) inadequate funds.

Traditionally in Tonga and other islands in the Pacific region, all information on culture and traditions of society was passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Therefore, there was no need to learn to read, or for the printed word except for religious materials like the Bible and other Church teachings. These were the first printed materials which the missionaries introduced, and are found in every Tongan home today. When the missionaries came to the Pacific they not only converted the 'heathens' into Christians but felt that the way to 'civilize' these people was through teaching them how to read and write. Missionaries set up the first schools and many of the secondary schools in Tonga today are still run by the main church denominations, e.g. the Latter Day Saints, Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Seventh Day Adventists, Catholics, and Free Church of Tonga. As schools were established and reading materials were introduced, oral traditions are slowly being eroded in urban areas but are, however still strong in rural areas (Rainey, 1996). There are still a lot of unrecorded legends, family history, land deeds, cultural practices, indigenous knowledge and histories which are passed down orally to the present generation.

A common problem not only Tongans come up against is where the present law system requires records and registration, especially matters relating to land. An uncle of my husband lost his piece of land to a non-family member this way when he went to the United States and

did not register the piece of land passed on to him by his father. The uncle did not think that this will happen for he thought that it was common knowledge that he owned the land when his father passed away and therefore did not see a reason to have it formally registered. The person who registered the piece of land and now legally owns it, is of the same village, an educated man and was a Bank manager. My husbands' uncle is not western educated and did not contest the loss of his land, partly because they come from the same village and know each other well. However he should not have been trusting and careless in the first place, for his sons now have no land.

I cite this example as this shows how oral tradition still dominates and influences the way people think and act. Most of the population live in the rural areas and therefore are influenced by their environment and customs, and the young are mostly exposed to oral and not printed information. As mentioned by Lotherington-Woloszyn (1990) in a study undertaken by Curtis (1986) and Goodman and Goodman (1979) 'that learning to read is a natural activity if normal children who are exposed to and interact with print will naturally develop through stages of reading readiness, without being 'taught' to read.' Nevertheless, people are beginning to realize the importance of education, being able to read and fill in simple forms. More of the younger generation are now becoming educated and at higher tertiary levels.

The second constraint to improving literacy rates is the lack of publishing firms, and as Williams (1986) reported in her survey of the publishing industry in the South Pacific region, most of the publishing is done by the Government (ministries and their departments), and churches. Publications are mostly government reports and related ministerial documents which are either in limited supply or restricted. Church materials are daily readings, religious teachings and principles mostly in the vernacular. As there is not much available to be published commercially, publishing is not a viable business for most of the writing and publishing is done by governments and churches. There is one private publishing company, the Vava'u Press which does commercial publishing and reprinting apart from the Government Printer and the Free Wesleyan Church which own printing presses. New Zealand and Australia publish some of their books in the United States and overseas due to the high costs of publishing. Tonga and the Pacific islands should consider pooling resources together on a regional basis for cooperative publishing. However with the advent of the computer, desk-top and online publishing is becoming more popular as it is less expensive and encourages more governmental, church and other individual and small publishing.

The third problem is that of insufficient reading materials available to all levels, especially reading materials in the vernacular. As mentioned above, printed materials are mainly of government and church for their purposes, and the latter are mostly in the vernacular. There are no reading materials for the very young and other levels of society for that matter. What little is available in the three main bookshops in town are limited, costly and in the English language. There is a limited selection of paperbacks for the adult sector, textbooks for the secondary and primary school levels (foreign and local), books on Tonga and the Pacific mainly from the University of the South Pacific, a limited selection of reference books, and church publications. The Ministry of Education publishes most of the primary school textbooks and a few for the secondary level. For the pre-school level, USP publishes a very popular reading series – the Waka Book Series, as well as a few published in the vernacular funded by the Canadian Government and administered through the local USP Centre. The problems mentioned by Rainey (1996) are the same for Tonga and the Pacific region in general regarding reading materials. Local writings are not encouraged as the market is small and publishing is costly. There is local talent as evident by the writing competitions held by the Tonga Library Association in the past, and other organizations and government ministries. However, these do not get

published mainly for lack of funds. As there is no national library or government supported public libraries, what is available in the three 'public' libraries on the three main islands are mostly gifts which are outdated and inappropriate for all levels of the public they are supposed to serve. I have not been to the other two public libraries on the other islands but the one on the main island also lacks reading material for the young and opens irregularly in the afternoons and evenings. Government have ministerial and departmental libraries which are small and mainly for staff use. School libraries will be discussed later.

The fourth problem is the lack of funding to assist in correcting the three problem areas discussed above, which are directly related to literacy development. Governments like Tonga have other more pressing needs and priorities which require the limited finances more than literacy improvement activities, such as the health services, educational services and infrastructure development. Small developing island economies are mainly dependent on foreign aid. The agricultural based economies are fragile, dependent on a few agricultural products which are influenced by nature and overseas market prices (e.g. price for Tonga's star produce -squash pumpkin has plummeted due to drop in the Japanese yen). There may also be fishing and tourism but that is about it. Fiji, Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia have a few natural resources and their economies are a bit more diversified then the rest of the region. Imports exceed exports and balance of trade deficit is a common developing country trademark. Tonga depends heavily on overseas aid from UNESCO and other countries like New Zealand and Australia for English and first language literacy programs. In education, Government relies on foreign aid to build school buildings, and on the efforts of school Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs) to provide for school needs like extra classrooms, science labs, toilet blocks, sports equipment, maintenance, and individual classroom needs. There is no extra money for literacy improvement and less so for library development for that matter.

Current Literacy Situation in Tonga
It is surprising that with all the problems facing literacy in Tonga, the latest population census survey of 1996, reported that 98.8% of the total population of 97,446 are literate. That is only 1.2% of the population or 1,169 people are illiterate. A literacy test which was advised by the Ministry of Education was conducted during this census survey. According to Dr 'Ana Taufe'ulungaki, Tonga's Deputy Director of Education responsible for primary schools, respondents were asked to read a paragraph in both English and Tongan and then write a similar paragraph on what they read. This was a functional literacy and a bilingual literacy test. All the respondents were either bilingual in both English and Tongan or proficient in Tongan only. In fact 72% of the 9 8.8% literate (or 69,318 out of 96,276) were bilingual from 5 years old and +. However, according to Dr. Taufe'ulungaki a lot of school children in class 1 and those not yet in school were included in this 1.2% of illiterates. So in fact if you take them off from the 1,169 figure, less than 1% of the population is illiterate. Another interesting piece of information is that school children at the end of class 6 were tested for language and maths literacy and it was found that their maths literacy in comparison to language was much higher. This is a marked improvement in a short time over the results of the Basic Education and Life Skills (BELS) regional study of literacy and numeracy skills of 10 South Pacific countries in 1993 by UNDP and Australia. The study of 25,000 children between ages of 9-10 or class 4 level showed that 40% of them could not demonstrate a significant start in reading or writing in English, and 20% could not perform simple arithmetical calculations. Tonga then had a 95% literacy rate.

However going back to the definition of literacy which the Tonga literacy test was based on, it is not a representative one of literacy as one cannot measure the capabilities or abilities of people under different circumstances with just this basic skill or being able to read and write. This

assumes that this is all that there is to being literate. To improve on this definition, it should be how people use and apply these skills of reading and writing meaningful to improve their way of life. In order for this to happen people must be provided with the means of improving these skills further through a supply of reading materials especially in their vernacular. This is where libraries come in.

Wright (1986) equates libraries with literacy in Papua New Guinea. He said that libraries play a crucial role in promoting and spreading literacy programs in PNG especially to the rural areas. Furthermore, libraries and librarians should be more active in their roles and go out to the public and advertise themselves and services, then letting the public come to them as was done in the past.

Out of 116 primary schools in Tonga, only about three that I know of have libraries, two of which are English speaking schools. One of these two schools, Tonga Side School, always has higher English language pass (including English related subjects), than mathematics. Not only do they sit a different exam for English than the rest of the other primary schools but they also dominate the pass rate into Tonga High School, the top academic high school in Tonga. There is no study to prove the correlation between a high language and academic pass to having a library, but having a school library is certainly a big influencing factor. The rest of the other primary school libraries have a few books kept in a cupboard or on a shelf in the Principal's office.

PTAs are now including libraries in their assistance projects to schools, as the Nuku'alofa Government Primary School just opened their new library, and another in the Nuku'alofa area, the Fasi-moe-Afi Government Primary School recently held a fundraising for a library. (Nuku'alofa is the capital of Tonga). Parents and teachers do realize the importance of libraries and are working towards them.

On the other hand there are 40 secondary schools, and most of these unlike the primary schools are church schools. These do have libraries but they have little to no budgets with the exception of the Latter Day Saints Church schools. The collections are outdated; badly need weeding; and replenishing with suitable texts and reading materials supportive of the curriculum and educational needs of the students. Library books are mostly gifts from ex-students, friends and overseas donors like Ranfurly, Asia Foundation, and foreign embassies based in Tonga. As noted by Rainey (1996), these books are mostly unsuitable and castaways. There are no efforts by these donors to improve the quality of their gifts by evaluation and letting the recipient take part in the selection. As mentioned earlier, special libraries are mostly of government departments. Relatively well developed ones are the Fisheries, Agriculture, Reserve Bank, and Central Planning which are computerised or in the process. Public libraries have been discussed beforehand. Other libraries include semi-public and academic libraries such as the USP Centre Library, the Teacher's Training College Library and the Peace Corps Library. These libraries are also well developed in quality, variety, and treatment of subject matter, and they have special Tonga and Pacific collections which are popularly used by students and researchers. Of the three, USP Centre has a better and bigger Pacific Collection and public access to it is not as restricted as the others.

Staffing is another matter, and most of the libraries are either staffed with untrained permanent staff or part-time staff who use the library as a study room or as a sitter for students when the class teacher is absent or sick. Libraries are of low priority not because it is by choice but because it is by necessity and financial constraint. Literacy levels appear to be directly related to the state or standard of libraries. There might not be any great government support for library

development in terms of finance and personnel, but there are programs which support literacy and indirectly foster library development. There are library skills lessons both in primary and secondary levels; teachers undergo library skills training programs; and there are national Literacy Day programs on the 8th of September for primary schools which includes : book character parades, dramas poetry reading, short story writing competitions and other activities. The Tonga Library Association held the first National Library Week in 1989 until 1993/94 when it was duplicating efforts by the Ministry of Education in their Literacy Day program. The Association now concentrates on library staff training, resource development and one or two major activity for schools in the town area. Since the beginning the Ministry has always been supportive of the Association's activities and continues to do so.

Economic Conditions and Standard of Libraries

Tonga's agricultural based economy is fragile and mainly dependent on foreign aid. 50% of Government revenue are generated by remittances from Tongans living overseas. Tonga like any other developing country faces problems of unemployment; balance of trade deficit; land shortage; underdeveloped infrastructure, health and other public services.

According to Kaungamno (1984), the state of libraries is directly related to the economic conditions of a country. If countries economies were developed and had the financial and technical personnel resources then libraries will also be well developed. The example of Japan and other developed countries show the two are correlated. Standard of libraries have a great impact on the level of literacy in Tonga for they play a vital role in the development of educational, cultural and intellectual life of learners. Libraries have become an integral and vital component of the education system. The availability and access to adequate and suitable reading material, proper facilities, and trained staffing, will contribute towards improved literacy levels. Libraries provide for the informational needs of its clients. A national or public library because of their nature as public institutions should provide for informational needs of every member of that community. Libraries no longer play a passive role in society due to rapid and revolutionary changes taking place in education through science and technology. If we keep on stocking our school libraries with outdated and inappropriate materials then we are not encouraging and helping our current and future leaders to read and to develop their intellectual and cultural knowledge. It is in the national interest to provide a good library service so that our future generations will be properly equipped with the intellectual knowledge and skills to make wise and effective decisions. Library's standards are definitely related to literacy levels as studies by Elley and Mangubhai (1980) and Ricketts (1982) show. That availability of suitable reading materials; being read to daily by teachers; home and environmental circumstances affect learning, emotional and social development of children. In Tonga economic conditions and income add to the low standard and status libraries hold If you have low income like the majority of the population do, you cannot afford reading materials at home. If there is inadequate health care and educational facilities, lack of trained teachers, including the lack of literacy materials for children both in English and in the vernacular, then Governments priorities will not be with developing libraries but with these other sectors of the economy. The standard of libraries will improve with a country's economic development

Tonga and Kaungamno's Developing Countries

Kaungamno (1984) lists characteristics common to developing countries in the Pacific region. However it must also be added that each country's unique culture, language, traditions and its history makes its experience and circumstances different from the other. Tonga was not colonized as other Pacific islands were. Therefore, there were no big foreign companies to exploit the land resources and did not experience imported plantation slavery like the Chinese in Samoa and Indians in Fiji. The first Tongan monarch collaborated with the missionaries and

converted himself and his people to Christianity.

The small island kingdom has its own way of doing things which to Europeans may at times appear to be excruciatingly slow. However traditions and cultural observations remain very important in Tonga and are accepted as central to life in Tonga. It is true that times are changing with more and more young people (and old) accessing education at higher levels. Education brings new ideas and aspirations and therefore way of doing things and ways of life. People do want a better standard of life and more luxury goods like European style houses, cars, T.V., computers, and other electrical appliances.. They know that a better education also brings a better standard of living and education is the best human resource to invest in and develop. Tongans value education highly and parents strive hard to educate their children. This means education also in Tongan custom language and traditions, as gaining western knowledge does not mean Tongans wish to give up their Tongan way of life or anga faka-Tonga. According to the late Sione Latukefu [a famous Tongan historian and writer], Tonga has the highest number of PhD graduates per capita in the Pacific and perhaps the world.

Most of the characteristics of developing countries Kaungamno (1984) discusses relating to economic conditions, standard of libraries and literacy levels are similar to Tonga's experience.

Future of Literacy in Tonga and Worldwide
Kaungamno (1984), Rainey (1990), and Wright (1986) are quite hopeful for the improvements in literacy rates throughout the world. What is required is more government commitment and financial support, more active public involvement, co-operation and partnership between the two. As Rainey (1990) suggested, the government through the Ministry of Education, can devise and 'develop curricular which will enable students to share national goals and aspirations and thereby promote political stability and build national unity.'

Governments would do well to enlist the help and advice of professionals, teachers, librarians, church leaders, parents, publishers, authors, business people and other community leaders to provide and lend support for the success of literacy programs that include library developments. On a regional level, cooperation between countries in the Pacific region to assist and learn from each others success and failures in literacy programs, and to adapt these programs to fit their local situation.

Furthermore co-operation and collaboration with international organizations literacy programs, like the successful Oceania Literacy Program which is funded by UNESCO, the Australia and New Zealand governments, and USP's Institute of Education. This program has key literacy workers and teachers from the region working together to: develop courses in literacy education; spearhead production of quality children's books; get other groups to actively participate and donate to the program through financial and book donation and exchange; develop a bibliography of children's books; and give support to other institutions doing similar work in promotion of children's books.

Conclusion
We have seen how the literacy levels of developing countries are directly affected by their economic circumstances and conditions, the important link between these two, and the standard of libraries and their state of development. One affects the other. Improved economic conditions can definitely improve the standard of libraries if financial resources are made available for resource development and reading materials which are readily accessible to the public. This will help raise literacy levels.

Developing countries however are often more concerned with improving other areas of edu-

cation and educational services. While this helps literacy rates, it often neglects library developments major contribution to literacy and educational success. Libraries provide everyone with an information service which assists them in their formal education, their occupation, and self development and fulfillment. We can provide essential library services to educate the population not all of whom will go on to obtain university degrees, If we do not provide the environment to nourish their minds and use their skills in literacy then they will remain with low levels of literacy. Basic literacy education can be done through libraries, especially in the rural areas. Tonga has **no** public libraries in rural areas where the majority of people live, though there are libraries in some secondary schools, these are not open to the public.

Developments in literacy levels and library situation in Tonga and other developing countries have improved over the years. People value education more now than before, and more people are getting a formal education. Families and communities are the ones who are now making changes within their countries, as they want a better standard of living for themselves and their children. They want better education and opportunities, better facilities which include libraries, and better literacy levels. People in the Pacific Islands and their governments do not have the funds and expertise to do this by themselves, so there is a great need for cooperation between people, their governments and international organizations to work together to help eradicate illiteracy. Literacy is a basic human need and a right for self-development and national interest. Literacy for all by the year 2000 may not be possible but will be greatly improved.

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Libraries and Literacy in the Marshall Islands

Carol Curtis

"Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit" Baha 'u 'llah *(Gleanings p. 260)*
"... knowledge is a veritable treasure for man, and a source of glory of bounty, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and gladness unto him." Baha 'ullah *(Tablets of Baha 'u 'llah p. 52)*

I believe that all humans are born with tremendous potential and if we are trained, and developed in the best way possible we can become "gems of inestimable value" (Baha'u'llah p. 260). Granted we are far from perfect, and the best possible circumstances are not usually available, but this should be our standard and our goal. In order to obtain knowledge, which is as a treasure, a joy, and a gladness to all, then every person must be given the opportunity to become literate. For me being literate means, as Rainey defines it, a state of being able to express the higher levels of ideas and thoughts. This must be our goal, our objective, no manner how inadequate our efforts. The necessity to be literate in our world today just in order to survive is obvious to most people, but the sad reality is that the number of illiterate people continues to rise world wide. The continual rise of illiteracy, along with the inherent lack of the development of our human potential, both at an individual level and a global level, should be of concern to all. In this paper I will discuss various aspects of literacy and its development in relationship to the availability of libraries. I will also include an overview of the library and literacy situation in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) with a brief mention of the global situation. Along with discussing the importance of libraries to literacy development I will also include a few suggestions for the advancement of literacy, which could be of great benefit in our efforts to totally eliminate illiteracy in our world.

Literacy definition

The RMI has not adopted a formal definition of literacy. After many telephone calls and discussions with several people, I was able to obtain a working definition of literacy developed by the Marshall Islands Task Force on Literacy Awareness (MITFOLA). Biram Siege, a member of MITFOLA, quoted from her minutes from a MITFOLA meeting the following working definition: "Literacy means having knowledge, skills and values to perform effectively as a parent, worker, and active community participant." Since it was so difficult to obtain this information, it is obvious that few people are aware of the existence or the work of the Task Force. The efforts to deal with illiteracy, beyond the scope of literacy development that occurs in the schools, is in its infancy. As a result, many issues and problems of illiteracy/literacy have not been addressed by this country, and much needs to be done. Although I agree with the basis of the working definition for literacy as stated above, I feel a more complete understanding of true literacy involves the higher levels of thought development. I agree fully with the characteristics of literacy derived by the educators at the Edmonton, Canada workshop held in 1987, mentioned by Rainey in his paper "Literacy: a world problem" (1990). Their final definition of a literate person as: "One who has the ability to achieve personal change by utilising the skills of critical analysis, reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing within the context of the community or society in which he/she lives,' provides a much broader and more comprehensive understanding of what should be the characteristics and abilities of one who has obtained literacy (Rainey, Fiji Library Association Journal, 1990, p. 40). One of the greatest values of literacy is the fulfillment of one's intellectual potential (Austrom 1987).

With this definition of literacy, one who is literate would have the skills and characteristics that would lead to knowledge and the possession of a "treasure" that would bring joy and gladness to one's life. The human gem would be polished and if this knowledge and ability is used for the betterment of humanity and our world, it would be of "inestimable value".

In discussing the relationship between literacy and libraries, it has been found that the nations or communities that support and have active, library programs, also have higher literacy rates. This correlation is especially evident in the developed countries of the world, where libraries have been established for a long period of time, and provide free access for all. The importance of having libraries in all schools is absolutely essential if we expect and want children to grow up respecting learning, the beauty of knowledge, and the wonderment of books. Since books are still the most common storage method found in most libraries, children must be taught how to care for and honor books, so that their quest for literacy has even more potency and results in a great feeling of self accomplishment. But the value placed on knowledge and the means to obtain it through books must be taught from the youngest years, if children are to maintain their inherent enthusiasm and curiosity for learning.

Libraries provide a wonderful means of supporting children's thirst for knowledge if the proper books are made available and the means of supporting children's needs are met by parents, other family members, library staff, and other community people. If children are provided with good education at least through the primary level, and basic literacy skills, in the vernacular and English, as defined above, are developed, by the time children leave the primary grades, it is possible for the child to continue his/her education on an informal basis where libraries and good reading materials are available. As Wright (1986) states, libraries can "compensate for the inability of our society to send all its children to school." Since this is the educational situation in the Pacific Region, where only a few students can continue on through secondary education, and even fewer are allowed to continue on to college and university level, then the need for good public library systems is of great importance, if we want educated and intellectually developed populations.

Not only does the availability of libraries assist with the development and education of our children, but literacy attainment and available library resources are closely intertwined with the economic activity of a community. The more information and knowledge that is available to the public the higher the level of economic development of the community. Thus libraries, which provide needed information for the community, assist in the attainment of higher and more advanced economic levels. However, the best libraries may be developed but if they are not used, then no service is given - thus the need for outreach activities by the libraries to the communities they serve, and the development of appropriate materials in the local language as well as in the English language.

The library situation in the Marshall Islands
Since the importance of libraries as a support to the development of not only literacy but economic and community advancement has been established, the need for libraries both in the schools and for the public at large is self-evident. The situation in the Marshall Islands, regarding libraries is very poor and inadequate. At present there are two public libraries in the country - Alele Library in Majuro serving a population of about 30,000 people in the major urban area, and the Grace Sherwood Library at the Kwajalein Missile Base, serving the U.S. missile base population. The Alele Library collection consists mostly of donated paperback novels, but there is a fairly well stocked special section of the library dealing with the Pacific Region. Most often one finds students in the library doing homework, but little else since the majority of adults do not understand or think of using libraries. The possible reasons for this will be

discussed below in another section of this paper. Recently a decision was made to gradually develop this library into primarily a children's library, since this is the population group that uses and needs it the most. The other major urban area in the Marshall Islands is Ebeye Island, located in Kwajalein Atoll, with a population of about 14,000 people. At present there are no library facilities available on Ebeye, and as far as I know the Grace Sherwood Library available for the people at the missile base on Kwajalein Island (part of Kwajalein Atoll) is off limits to people living on Ebeye. Twenty-two other atolls have populations living in numerous small village communities.

All together these communities total about 20,000 people, and none of these communities have any library or book facilities. Out of a total of 76 public elementary schools in the country, six of these schools, all on Majuro atoll, have school libraries which have been developed only in the last two years. With a total of 30 private elementary schools in the country, only three of these schools have libraries of some sort. There is one middle school (to 8th grade only) in Majuro, which has 340 students and no library, There are only three public high schools in the country, and two of these have libraries. Out of nine private high schools, two have libraries. The only other libraries, serving their own specific communities, are the College of Marshall Islands (CMI) and a very small University of South Pacific (USP) Extension Library.

There are also nine special libraries serving the needs of specific populations, such as the Medical Library at the hospital, or the Nuclear Claims Library, or Law Library at the Courthouse. The total number of libraries available is totally inadequate to serve the needs of the people where more than 60% of the population has no library facilities. Along with not having enough libraries, there is no community outreach activities by any of the libraries, and most libraries, such as the school libraries are not open to the public. As far as I have been able to learn, nothing in the Marshallese language has been produced and made available to the public through the libraries. Reading is not a highly prized activity and almost no books are found in the average home, so the promotion of books and reading is almost non-existent. The Marshall Islands Library Association (MILA) is working on various ways to improve this situation, by promoting story hours, and trying to make books more available to school children. Through the many years that I have lived here always living with local families, most people have always been surprised how I love to read during almost any spare moment, but when I ask people their thoughts about reading, they usually say they don't like to read. I think the real reasons, for this dislike of reading, are a result of not learning while young about the wonder and enjoyment that can be found through reading, the fact that most people have very weak literacy skills in both the vernacular and English languages, and the tremendous lack of written materials in the local language.

In the article "Literacy and Reading in the South Pacific: Problems and Solutions," (1996), Rainey discusses many of the same circumstances and concerns found in the Marshall Islands such as a rich oral tradition which puts written matter at a distinct disadvantage, lack of a developed publishing industry, receipt of gifts of inappropriate books, high freight costs, and lack of library budgets. If we really want to attack the problem of very limited literacy skills or illiteracy in all its forms then planning and funding for literacy and library development must be made available from the highest levels of government, and studies and research done by such people as Elly & Mangubhai (1980) should be heeded, especially by educators and primary school teachers who are in the classroom on a daily basis. Daily oral reading to children, as the results indicated in these studies, is one of the basic activities which can lead to a more literate and active reading population. As suggested, our methods of teaching, and support for teaching – such as the development of high interest illustrated books, especially in the ver-

nacular – is essential. As Ricketts (1986) suggests in her teachings, just reading to students 15-30 minutes daily in English, even though this is the second language for the students, greatly enhances the comprehension and listening abilities of the students. Something so simple and basic, if we develop the materials needed, could greatly improve the literacy skills of the children in our country.

The effect the libraries have on the literacy capabilities of the children and general population, in the Marshall Islands, is very limited. Basically nothing is available beyond the classroom except in the schools that have small libraries. As stated before no books are available in the vernacular except the weekly newspaper, which uses both Marshallese and English, and the Bible. A new primary level curriculum has been developed for the country, and for each school year there is a section on Marshallese Language Arts, which is all done in the Marshallese language, but I was unable to locate other supporting materials in the vernacular. This new curriculum was first introduced at the beginning of the school year 1997, so it is possible that other supporting materials are/will be developed, although I could not confirm this.

There are no adult literacy programs per se although the Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Development (GED) programs are located at the College of the Marshall Islands. The classes offered are geared around improving existing English capabilities and preparing students to take the GED High School Equivalency Test that is used in the United States. During the 1996-1997 school year there were 253 students enrolled in some of these adult classes. Since the library situation is so deplorable, especially regarding the lack of public libraries, non-formal education is almost non-existent. With the development of more libraries, especially for children in the earliest grades of school, slowly the need for and the benefits that can be obtained through the use of libraries will be understood by the larger population, and hopefully this will convince the government and communities in general to support and develop more public libraries.

Problems facing the Marshall Islands and other developing countries
The educational situation of both girls and boys in the Marshall Islands is not good at all. The best estimates indicate that about 40% of the children, ages 5-19 years, are not in school (Five Year Plan for Libraries in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 1999-2004). Only about 20% of all girls and about 22% of all boys complete secondary education (First Report on Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1996). In 1992, 78% of elementary school aged children attended class, which means that 22% were not even in school. Out of each cohort of students beginning 1st grade approximately 30% drop out before 7th grade and 60% drop out before 9th grade. For those who are able to continue on to high school only 52% of the girls and 58% of the boys who started high school, will graduate. As these figures show, the educational attainment in this country is very low. Most students entering 9th grade in the high school where I teach have reading skills at about second to third grade level in English, and although we haven't tested their Marshallese language skills, these skills seem to be not much higher than their English skills.

When students are asked to write something in the vernacular, it is very evident that their Marshallese literacy skills are also very weak. As mentioned before one of the major problems is lack of materials in the vernacular and lack of libraries to provide access to needed materials. In the RMI there are basically no Marshallese authors, limited employment at very low salaries for full time translators, no copyright laws, only limited printing facilities, and no true publication companies. Many of the problems we face here in dealing with the issue of education and literacy are also found in other developing countries.

As we know the incidence of illiteracy is on the rise world wide, and since there must be a tremendous increase in the availability of good teachers and educational facilities in order to provide every child in the world with a good education, it is imperative that this problem be addressed at the global, national, and the village or community levels. As Rainey mentions in his article "Literacy: a world problem" (1990), even highly developed countries have relatively high illiteracy rate, and only one third of the people who learn to read actually become habitual readers. Not only does a good education constitute the attainment of literacy, but also the development of good moral and ethical characteristics. If the learning of good morals or ethics is not also incorporated into the educational process, then what a child learns, even with excellent literacy skills, may be of no benefit to him or her or to others. For, without understanding and being able to apply to our daily lives, the universal truths which serve all societies (such as trustworthiness, responsibility, self discipline, etc.) a person may become a detriment to society, and cause endless amounts of harm and difficulties.

Although more and more countries are slowly supporting the education of the girl child I feet very strongly that this is one of the major keys to obtaining literacy, basic good health, and a decent standard of living for all. I believe that the education of woman is more necessary and important than that of man. "The mothers are the first educators of mankind; if they be imperfect, alas for the condition and future of the race." ('Abdu'l-Baha, 1982). It has been shown, and the United Nations, UNICEF, and other international organizations now support this concept, that when you educate a girl child or a woman you educate a family. When you educate a boy child or man you educate one person. Thus if we want a better life and world for our children or grandchildren, then the girls must be educated first, if there is not enough educational means to educate all children. This may seem like a very radical concept, but if one reflects for a moment, the soundness of such a proposal becomes obvious. This is not to say that such a goal would be easy to implement, but in a very short time the benefits would be most evident. Today there are extremes of all cases, countries where girls are still not widely allowed to go to school or to receive any form of education outside the home (the extreme being Afghanistan), but also, in general throughout the world, the boy child is sent to school first, and if means provide, maybe then the girl child. Also the boy child is encouraged to continue and complete his education and is supported both directly and indirectly by his family and entire community and society.

Whereas the girl child may have the opportunity to attend school, usually there is little real support from the family and especially the community to keep her in school. If the world took 10 to 15 years and put most of its energy into providing good education for every girl child, along with all supporting materials and encouragement needed, I propose that the next generation (male and female alike), born by these educated girls, would be a generation fully literate, practicing good health habits, and having the necessary skills to be able to attain to a decent standard of living. The reason why I say this is because no fully literate mother is going to allow her children to be illiterate. She will teach them herself, if there is no other way. No literate mother who has information and knowledge available to her is going to allow her children to be unhealthy if in anyway she can prevent it. And no educated mother is going to tolerate poor living conditions for her family, and will arise with all possible means to find solutions to whatever circumstances she may need to improve.

I realize the solution I propose is more complicated than stated, but it is true that a mother if she possesses self-esteem and has the knowledge needed, will improve the circumstances of her children, and will not be willing to sit by and allow things to go out of control, because she has no power, education, self confidence, etc., as is often the case today. When women are in the forefront with men in all endeavors and concerns they will force changes in policy from

the local, to the national, to the international level, that will provide for the needs of all the world's children. This is an inherent aspect of women, and also the strongest aspect for the betterment of the world. I am not denying the true concerns of men and their wanting to alleviate so many of the horrible conditions that exist on our earth, but the woman must also be in the forefront since it is the woman who bears the child and is its first educator. If women had an equal say in the affairs of the world, war would cease, because mothers would not allow their children to go off to be killed, and the powers that be would be forced to negotiate settlements and agreements without war. This is the true power of women, and combined with the efforts and cooperation of men, the world could literally be transformed.

World and national government commitment to the issue of literacy Governments at all levels need to make a much greater commitment to the problem of irradiating illiteracy if we are to have an educated world population, based on the principles of equality of opportunity and justice. This issue must be of highest priority at national and international levels if we ever hope to improve the current situation. The standard of living in the Marshall Islands, based on income levels in the urban areas, although relatively high compared to other areas of the Pacific, is still very low compared to the developed countries in the world. This is most obvious when one considers the high cost of the imported goods, which are necessary for survival today in an atoll nation.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands consists of 70 square miles of land spread out on 29 different atolls and 4 single islands, which are dispersed throughout an area of over 500,000 square miles of ocean. Presently the population is estimated to be about 67,000 people, with 70% of the people living in the two major urban areas of Majuro and Ebeye. With this type of situation vast amounts of imported staples is absolutely essential. The per capita income in 1993 was $1,600 for the urban area and $200-$500 per capita in the rural areas (First Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1996). The disparity between the urban and rural areas is extreme and is a problem that needs to be addressed by the national government. Although the standard of living is low, I feel there is much that can be done through setting proper priorities and long term planning and budgeting at the governmental, family and individual levels.

There is waste as is the case in all places, but if wastage was almost eliminated, then more resources, especially more governmental funding, would be available for greatly needed improvements in education and possibly the providing of more libraries. If families eliminated some of their non-essential purchases, then there may be some money to buy a few books, or support in other ways the educational and health attainment of their children. The urban areas of Majuro and Ebeye are extremely crowded. The DUD area of Majuro has a population density of about 30,000 people per sq. mile. Ebeye Island, with a population density of about 90,000 people per sq. mile and no high rise buildings, is one of the most crowded areas in the world. This situation does not lead to conducive circumstances for the educational attainment of the children, along with the fact that it is very difficult to find a place to physically locate libraries, if this was actually the pursuit of the schools or communities.

I think there is definitely a correlation between a low standard of living and the lack of better educational facilities, especially libraries. As stated above, priorities need to be set and the money that is available needs to be spent in more appropriate ways to met the needs of the entire population, not mainly just a few elite persons, as is the case in many countries. But in order to make these major changes, it must come from the will of the entire world's population, and as yet the world's people have not been willing to adjust economic circumstances so that everyone is provided with the basics for a decent life, which includes the attainment of

literacy. As Kaungammo (1984) states in his most interesting article "Books and libraries in the Third World: problems and prospects", the distribution of the world's wealth is totally unjust. That 66.66% of the world's population consume only 10% of the world's goods and only 7% of the world's total manufactured goods is outrageous! This means that the other 33.33% of the world's people consume 90% of the world's goods and 93% of the world's manufactured products. With these totally inequitable figures it should be apparent that the need for the redistribution of the world's wealth is absolutely essential if we hope to give to future generations a world where educational attainment for all is available, and peace and justice abides. Granted what I am saying is not highly supported by the wealthy countries or peoples of the world, but if we look to the overall attainment for everyone, and the improvement this would bring, and if we believe in education and literacy for all, huge changes and a more equitable system must be developed. If this does not happen, then what is our future everywhere on this planet?

With a more equitable distribution of wealth, the world and each nation would be more able to provide education for all children and good libraries to assist in the attainment of literacy and knowledge. And our very much travailed world would be a much better and more joyous place for all living creatures, for the efforts that go into destruction and war, disagreement and selfish pursuits, would possibly be outweighed by the higher attainment of knowledge and hopefully greater understanding and cooperation.

Conclusion

I have shown in this paper that better library systems will help provide a higher literacy attainment for the people who have access to libraries, and that a literate population can help raise the standard of living of its people. The correlation between literacy improvement and the availability of library services is very strong.

Although I have included other aspects of literacy and libraries not mentioned before, specifically the education of the girl child and woman, and the redistribution of the world's wealth, I feel that any issue that is global has to be also looked at from a world perspective, as well as at the national and local levels. The issue of world literacy and the importance of providing libraries to the world's population is too broad and important a topic to cover lightly or in just a few pages, thus the extended length of this paper. Again in summary, I emphasize the importance of the education of the girls and the needed cooperation and willingness of everyone in order to have a future world population that is literate and able to deal with its life's concerns in a way that will provide for the happiness and well being of all.

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Education, Training And Need For Standards For Archivists And Record Keepers In The Pacific Region

Sam Kaima

Introduction

Early Europeans who came to the Pacific searching for God, gold and glory have generated records about their visits, explorations and experiences. They collected artifacts, wrote reports, kept diaries and took photographs of many islanders. Some of these records are now archival documents and will be held in private archives in Europe and other records will be in official church or colonial archives in former parent countries. Countries such as Germany, United Kingdom, France, Australia, United States, Japan, and New Zealand are noted for their Pacific archives.

In some cases, books and periodical articles have been published and there are numerous copies of them that can be retrieved from libraries in the region. The libraries in the region today are concerned with the management of published documents, in particular books. These library collections are properly developed, managed and used. However, this paper focuses on creation, management, and retrieval of unpublished sources of information. These are the archives and records of many island nations that still have to be identified, created, stored, and retrieved when needed. The management and organisation of unpublished documents remains a major problem for many island nations, as this paper will show.

Aside from keeping records for historical research and future reference, these records, if kept properly, provide evidence for accountability purposes. The current records of government operations provide evidence in that when a record is needed record keepers should be able to retrieve it and provide evidences of all transactions. Unfortunately, this has been neglected by the PNG government, as this paper will show.

The information presented in this paper is the result of my consultancy workshops for government departments in PNG, as well as information gathered in the past while attending several PARBICA[1] workshops and meetings[2]. My own research for a Higher Degree at Monash University also provided necessary information for this paper[3]. Although it refers to Pacific archives and records, the discussion here will focus on PNG which I hope will show other island nations of the need for better management and preservation of our archival heritage.

My own papers on archives and records management issues in PNG have been published and discussed. I am just preparing a paper with a very similar title with a focus on PNG for the PNGLA[4] conference[5]. This paper discusses archival records of the region and brings together information and need for documentation programs for archival records. It will then look at current record keeping practices and the need to develop standards and policies for management of current records future use. Finally I will consider the work of the island archivists and records managers in the region.

1. Archival records of the region: documenting the Pacific

Archival records of different Pacific island countries today were created and accumulated during colonial era by Europeans who came to the region and ended up in different island territories. The study of Pacific history through Australian National University (ANU) led to the development of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PAMBU) which up to now caters for micro-

filming of private archives related to the region and or individual countries. Pacific historians saw the need to bring together information about the region so that access to the written documents for the study of Pacific history is available for researchers. The role and functions of PAMBU have been discussed in the past[6] and as the organisation expands its service throughout the region, information about archival records of the region will continue to grow, as recently discussed by Cunningham[7] and Maidment[8] . There are Pacific collections that have also developed as a result of research interest about the region. Amongst such collections are the Mitchell Library in Sydney, the Pacific Collection at Hamilton Library (University of Hawaii) and the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, New Zealand. The end result of the work of PAMBU has been the compilation of volumes of indexes and microfilm copies of manuscripts relating to the region[9].

Microfilm copies have been distributed to many archives and libraries in the region while copies have been deposited in libraries around the world. Aside from microfilming documents, there is a need to identify more records of value and at the same time to produce guides to archival records to assist future research. Some guides to collections relating to the region have been compiled in the past[10] and this should be encouraged. Individual island nations should be encouraged to identify their records and produce guides from such major lists.

Researchers too can assist by providing information about archival collections they use overseas and then informing archivists and other researchers. There are, for example, guides to records relating to PNG produced in the past. Some of the guides have been produced in the New Guinea Collection of UPNG Library while the National Archives have also produced guides to some important archival collections. Nancy Lutton produced a guide to the NGC archives[11], and Andrew Griffin[12] and Elizabeth Estberg[13] produced compact guides to smaller collections in the New Guinea Collection. In the National Archives, Jacob Hevelawa produced several guides to heavily used and important records of the country[14]. Recently a historian, Biama Kanasa, produced a guide to records relating to PNG that are held at the Australian War Museum[15]. The recently microfilmed Patrol Reports of Districts in the country will prove to be very useful historical resources for researchers in the future. To allow for access, the Patrol Reports have been sent or deposited in overseas archival institutions. Such guides and assistance will provide for quick access to researchers and those who may want the information in the future. In a similar way island archivists need to be encouraged to produce guides for heavily used archival materials in their collections.

2. Current Records Management in PNG: some thoughts for the region.
Since the day of their political independence, many of our island nations have inherited a colonial legacy regarding archives and records management. In the process, the traditions of record keeping have been handed down from colonial administrators. Many of our government bureaucracies daily operate their registries amid various problems, some of which are faced by other nations.

2.1 Lack of legislation
One of the major problems for management of records of PNG has been lack of legislation to allow for better organisation and arrangement of records for future use. The PNG National Library and Archives Act was passed in 1993[16] and remains to be enforced. However, this Act alone can not impose records generation, storage and management. There are other regulations that all public servants must follow when creating files and records of their daily transactions. The public service procedures must be followed which will in due course produce records of the transactions. Many officers who refuse to follow procedures often fast track procedures and as a result, files and records of those transactions are not documented. Many are scared of

providing records of transactions as these may provide evidences of their actions. However, if procedures are followed one should not fear anything about corruption and of bribery.

Because many government officers have not followed procedures, there has been a lack of evidence of transactions if and when required. And because there is a lack of legislation many files of official transactions are often destroyed without any thought for the archival value of the records. If procedures are followed when files are closed, the records should be appraised and then destroyed and or transferred to the National Archives for permanent preservation.

2.2. Lack of management support

Lack of management support, in particular a lack of understanding of records management by senior officers, accounts for many of the problems facing the records section of government departments of PNG. Lack of recognition for archives and records has led to neglect and in many cases funding and staff training had not been pursued by organisations. Added to this is the problem of inadequate budgets for basic materials for records and files generation and management. Management needs to be made aware of the legal requirements and many organisations and government departments will have to recognise, through appropriate funding, the work of archives and records in the region.

2.3 Lack of standards/principles of management

The highest standards and procedures need to be followed when creating, storing and retrieving files in government departments. One of the major problems for registry clerks and officers in PNG has been and continues to be the lack of procedure manuals. In particular, there have never been any Disposal/Retention Schedules for registry clerks to follow. If regulations and procedures are set in place then current record keepers should have no problem in deciding what to transfer to the National Archives and what to destroy. Some files have been continually accumulated even when there was no need to keep the files.

3. The Need for Education and Training: The Roles of UPNG, USP, National Archives and PARBICA

Training for archivists and record managers in the region has been neglected in the past, and continues to be so, as the governments are more concerned with developmental projects rather than basic normal routine procedures that policy makers feel are not important to the nation. For example, scholarships for Pacific Islander students have been awarded in those areas that the governments think will be of value to the nation. Archives and records management scholarships have not been available in many island nations and as a result, many of their archives staff still remain to be trained at professional levels. I am afraid this is still same in the case of PNG, as I will discuss in the later part of this section on training.

Despite the adoption of conventional procedures of record keeping, many of our island nations operate and keep records under difficult circumstances and with no set principles and procedures.

3.1 Training programs

Many of our islander professional archivists have been trained overseas, especially in Australia.[17] In many cases scholarships have been awarded to other areas of government priority and as a result there have been few scholarships in information sciences (including archives and records) in many Pacific island countries.

There are library schools at the USP and UPNG that could allow for training of record keepers and archivists. UPNG has taken the lead in this direction but caters only for students from the

country as well as the Solomon Islands. The courses offered here lead to a qualification in Library Science and not archives and records management. A formal Certificate course was started in 1991 for registry clerks in PNG[18] but lapsed when I left for studies. It is hoped that a formal two-year Diploma in archives will be offered in the near future. Several methods of training for islander archivists can be drawn up in the future.

3.1.1. Lengthy Degree programs overseas

Few islanders have undertaken long term Degree programs overseas and those that did go often encountered a series of problems relating to family and environment. The theory of archives and records management is taught in these archives schools, but in most cases the practical aspect of training proves to be vastly different from that of the archives in the Pacific islands. There is a different work environment – archives overseas use computers, and other electronic devices, while most of the island nations have nothing as such. Gaining academic theories and qualifications will in the long run be of benefit to the individual but practically some of these theories cannot easily be applied once one returns to his/her country after completion of studies.

Furthermore, admission requirements for many overseas universities are strict and many Pacific island archivists are not eligible as they would have only completed Grade ten at High Schools. These registry clerks, however, have extensive work experience and, as I found out, many of them knew what they are doing without any form of training at all. If overseas universities are strict then this will make it impossible to admit many of our island archivists because of admission requirements.

With such difficulties there is a need for plans to conduct in-country training programs in future. It will be cheaper, more locally conductive and examples can be used from within the local area. The Pacific islanders will then be able to see for themselves the operations of registries and principles of managing archives and problems faced within their own countries.

3.1.2. Workshops/Seminars

The biennial workshops and seminars conducted by PARBICA have been the only means for many island archivists to attend some form of training. Few have attended BISA courses at UNSW; Peter Orlovich has recently conducted a workshop in Fiji and my own workshops for registry clerks in PNG have been popular. I have found that the local workshops have helped the participants to share their knowledge and discuss problems faced by their registries. Some have even volunteered to show the participants of the operations of the registries.

Separate workshops will be needed for different levels of people and for archivists and managers of current records in the country. A registry clerk in PNG for example, will not know much about archive management, or vice versa, some archivists do not know the operations of a registry. Different workshop programs will have to be designed to suit the needs of participants. There is also a need for management and senior officers to be informed during seminars of the importance of archives and record management in many island countries so that they too are aware of the need for better record keeping.

3.1.3. Work Attachments

Major archives and registries in PNG can and should allow for staff from registries to move around and gain work experience in different registries within the same department and or other departments. The National Archives of PNG can use this facility as they have been short of staff and help in this regard should be appreciated.

3.2. Role of PARBICA

PARBICA was set up in Fiji in 1981 and since its inception training workshops for islanders archivists have been conducted all over the region in the past, the most recent being in New Caledonia in 1997. There are five basic aims of PARBICA. They are to promote and establish relations between archivists of the region, to promote preservation of records, to promote the use of archives, to organise archival activities in the region and to sponsor professional training for archivists of the region[19]. In trying to understand the operations of archives in the region, training workshops have been conducted on different aspects of archives management in the region. At the same time fact-finding missions have been conducted in the past to see what archives in the region have and what problems they may face. Bruce Burne has conducted two such fact-finding missions[20] as well as Lindsay Cleland.[21] Bruce Burne's trip took him to Kiribati, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa and the Solomon Islands. The next trip taken by Cleland took him to the north of the Pacific and the countries visited included Commonwealth of Northern Marinas, Republic of Palau, Guam, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands and Kiribati. Aside from these fact-finding visits individual countries have written about the operations of the archives in their own countries[22]. Most of these country reports have also been presented at PARBICA workshops.

In general many archives in the region have similar and related problems and surely attempts can be made to solve some of these problems areas. Most stressing, though, is the lack of training for staff and funds to operate archives effectively, and lack of storage space; all seem to be Pacific wide.

Since its inception PARBICA has conducted training workshops in Sydney, Port Moresby, Wellington, American/Western Samoa and New Caledonia. The next workshop is scheduled for Suva in 1999. Like many regional organisations, this organisation relies heavily on financial assistance from overseas and when there is funding it can host training workshops. Membership fees are lacking, which many island nations archive could not afford anyway. The large and wide area in which the region is situated often makes it difficult and expensive to fly people around the Pacific to attend one or two week workshop.

If there is funding, PARBICA can, for example, run workshops in different countries. Such workshops would reach more people at one time, rather than one person flying from one country to a central workshop. On-site visits, consultancy trips and visits by professionals are, in my view, a better alternative than expensive workshops. Despite PARBICA's having members from the Micronesian region, the region has also formed the Pacific Islands Archives and Libraries Association (PIALA). It is hoped that this association will not split into two associations because there is a need for co-operation among libraries and archives of the region.

3.3 Role of National Archives

National archives of Pacific Island nations can be used as possible training grounds for many record keepers in the region to gain hands-on experiences. There are some large archival collections in the region, while there are smaller ones that operate together with a museum and the national library. For smaller nations it may be difficult to assist in training archives officers of the region. The administrators of large archival collections can, in my view, arrange for work attachments and or exchange staff among the different country archives.

The National Archives must be seen to take a leading role in providing training and where necessary, advising for better record management throughout the region. If national archives are properly funded and staffed they can provide some advice and assist in preserving the records of the nations in the region.

3.4 Role of Universities

While university education is becoming popular in the region information-related courses are being offered at some of these campuses. The UPNG and USP have library schools that have developed Diploma/Degree courses in librarianship. Archives and record courses have not been included, as part of the course at USP, but UPNG have started conducting courses and regular workshops on archives and records management throughout the country.

The role of UPNG in starting courses at the Library School and arranging for workshops has been discussed by myself in the past. It is not complete, there is a need for more such programs in the country and in particular the workshops, which have proved popular, should continue into the future. Perhaps USP and UPNG can combine forces in trying to introduce archives and record management courses and or workshops for our archivists. This will allow for standardised practices and methods of archival management in the region. The USP run extension studies program should be used to help train archivists in the region who may have limited resources to leave their place of work. Instead of going abroad for studies the archivists can stay home and do the course through extension in future.

The three agencies, (USP, UPNG and PARBICA) can draw up plans for a training package for Pacific Island archivists. It is my belief that the problems faced by island archivists are the same all over and that better planning will mean a good distribution of training programs for many of our archivists. Due to lack of funds and staff there is a need for island archivists and regional training institutions to allow working together to train archivists. The island nations have similar problems and, if time allows, planning for similar training workshops and programs should be encouraged. PARBICA has done this despite the financial problems it has faced in the past.

3.5 The Future of Pacific related archives

Perhaps the advancement of modern information and communication technology will no doubt have an impact on record keeping procedures in many of our island nations. Information and records are being generated at a faster rate than the past and some policies and principles will have to be put in place so that records generated are captured, stored and retrieved later in the future. With the introduction of Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) many information sources will be on the Net. Unless standardised procedures are raised for many archives in the region there will be problems in attempting to set up information systems on the Net in the future.

This will improve if all archives and registries have access to these facilities. It will be interesting to see if training programs can be conducted on the Net instead of setting up workshops at great cost where participants are flown in from the region. The cost can be saved for other plans for expansion of the archives. At the same time archival resources will be easier to access if the information is on the Net. This will, however, provide another educational problem for many of us who will need to be trained to use and manage electronic records in the future. Like the other forms of training discussed above, electronic record management can be handled if plans and policies for managing electronic records are also outlined.

Conclusion

The training for record management and archives in the region can realised if and when there is nationwide publicity and recognition of the importance of records for accountability purposes. In the process of training, standards will have to be looked at so that archival practices are similar throughout the region. The island nations today have similar problems relating to archives and records and if plans are made to solve these problems they can be overcome.

Archives and records are an information source and will be an important cultural heritage for many of the island nations and therefore better management patterns and preservation methods must be put in place now to manage records and archives of the island nations.

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Footnotes

[1] PARBICA is an acronym for Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council of Archives (ICA), one of the regional branches of ICA formed in Fiji in 1981.

[2] I have attended PARBICA Workshops in 1987 in Port Moresby, 1991 in American and Western Samoa and 1993 in Guam.

[3] Kaima, Sam. *Education in Papua New Guinea: Recordkeeping practices, past, present and the* Department of Librarianship, Archives and Records, Monash University *future* (Ph.D. thesis, in progress). (A summarised version of this has been published in *PNG journal of education* 33 (2), p. 107-116, 1997.)

[4] PNGLA stands for Papua New Guinea Library Association.

[5] Kaima, Sam 1998. 'Education, Training and need for standards for records management in PNG'. A paper for presentation in the PNG Library Association Conference November 23-27 1998.

[6] See articles by the first Executive Officer of PAMBU - Robert Langdon. 1969. 'The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau: a unique project in library co-operation on an international scale.' *Archives and manuscripts*. 3 (8), p. 16-23. See also Robert Langdon. 1970. 'The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau.' *Journal of Pacific history*. 5, p. 59-173.

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[15] Kanasa, Biama, comp. 1996. *A research guide to World War II: files on Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) and natives that appear in the Australian national guide to archival materials* (ANGAM 2. Port Moresby: UPNG Press.

[16] Papua New Guinea Laws and Statutes. National Library and Archives Act. 1993.

[17] At the time of writing this paper PNG for example had trained seven archivists at the UNSW. Of these five have been from the PNG National Archives, most of them have left for greener pastures, one resigned despite being the Chief Archivist, the other is now completing his Masters from UNSW. Two of us are involved in teaching archives and records courses at UPNG. Solomon Islands has one qualified archivist from Monash University, Fiji has graduated one from UNSW.

[18] *See* report on this Certificate. See summaries in: Kaima, Sam. 1990. 'Archives and records management training in Papua New Guinea.' *COMLA newsletter* 78, p. 27-31, and Kaima, Sam 1991. 'Certificate in Information Studies (Records Management) : a review after two years.' *COMLA newsletter* 79, p. 19-23.

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[22] Examples of some of these country reports have been published in *Pacific archives journal.* 1989. National Archives of Fiji by Masood A. Khan *Pacific archives journal* 10, p. 10-12; Vanuatu National Archives by Willie Toa. *Pacific archives journal* 10, p. 12-13, 1989. Report from Tonga by Salote Aleamotu'a *Pacific archives journal* 10, p. 14-15, 1989. Federated States of Micronesia, country report by Jones George *Pacific archives journal* 9, p. 25-32, 1988. Hevelawa, Jacob. Problems of Archival Development in Papua New Guinea. *Pacific archives journal* 8, p. 5-9, 1988. Kauraka, Kauraka 1990. Cook Islands Archives Progress Report. *Pacific archives journal* 9, p.5 0-52. Bruno Corre, 1988. Archives in New Caledonia. *Pacific archives journal.* 9, p. 22-23.

National Information Policy

Sin Joan Yee

With the advance of new information technologies and the rise of the service economies, "information" or "knowledge" is now acknowledged as the most valuable resource of the national economy. It is widely recognised that "the wealth of nations is increasingly based on the creation and exploitation of knowledge"[1]. The GII (Global Information Infrastructure) that has emerged has transformed the world. Advances in the GII has affected and will affect almost all aspects of our daily lives, whether we live in an advanced nation such as the United States or on a small island state such as Fiji. As Al Gore Jr., the Vice President of the United States, has said:

> *"We are on the verge of a revolution that is just as profound as the change in the economy that came with the industrial revolution... Disparate populations, once separated by distance and time, will experience these changes as part of a global community".*

What is National Information Policy?
The close interplay between communications technology, information and economics that has developed has focussed much attention on the need for national information policies. There has been an increased interest in developing a policy framework in order to take advantage of the social and economic possibilities that can be derived from an information society.

Many countries, both developed and developing, have introduced national information policies that are fully incorporated into their national development plans and strategies. Such policies are designed to provide guidance and strategies for the development of information resources, services and systems – that is, for the development of the information infrastructure. Although they are usually associated with government information, such policies also establish the framework or regulations within which the private sector must operate. Areas identified as needing government policy are not limited to technological ones on hardware and software. They include:

- Guidelines on the creation, distribution and use of information
- Access to information, including the issues of freedom of information, and the democratic right of the public to information.
- Sharing of information
- Issues related to intellectual property, copyright, patents: ownership, accountability and accessibility issues
- Privacy of information, confidentiality and ethical issues on the use of private information
- Censorship: does society need to be protected?
- Literacy issues
- Charges for information, if any
- Users, producers, Service providers of information
- Applications
- Consistency with other government initiatives and strategies

The overall aim of a national information policy is to provide access to and optimal utilisation of information and knowledge, both local and international, as a resource for all aspects of development. Specific objectives of national information policies include the following:

- Provision of relevant and timely information at a reasonable cost to all those contributing to national development goals
- Improvement of the collection, dissemination and use of information by different groups, e.g. decision-makers, development planners, practitioners, researchers, administrators, farmers, the business community, etc.
- Preparation of a plan of action for the development of the information system
- Co-ordination of the various components or services of the national information system, both in the private and public sectors (e.g. library systems and services, data banks, data-bases, archives, statistical services, etc.)
- Encouragement of all information providers to share information – locally, nationally, regionally and internationally – through the use of innovative methods, including new technology
- Promotion of standards and compatibility among information systems
- Promotion of the use of local expertise in information handling
- "Democratisation" of information by providing access to information to all groups within the society
- Planning and building human resource skills in information and informatics
- Ensuring that information initiatives are sustainable and flexible.

Governments throughout the world have used a variety of approaches towards instituting national information policies. The main approaches have been through:[2]

- Legislation: Enacting specific direct legislation on information sectors, e.g. data protection, computer misuse, copyright legislation
- Regulation: Activities such as telecommunications and broadcasting are regulated and certain standards are implemented
- Infrastructure Development: Support for the development of international and national developments as well as of particular areas (e.g. the software industry)
- Service provision: Concerns are usually very wide and cover the delivery and use of information at all levels – governmental, private sector or even at the personal level of individual citizens. Libraries fall into this category.
- Education policies: These aim to develop the education sector and promote broad educational objectives including that of literacy. Libraries also fall into this category.
- Cultural policies: These aim to foster and protect the national culture and heritage and cover national libraries, museums, archives, etc.

The Case For or Against
The concept of national information policy is still relatively new, and is the subject of current debate. According to Victor Montviloff, a UNESCO expert, it "is still at an early stage of development, where theories are not yet fully accepted and opinions are still often controversial"[3].

Whilst many countries have instituted national information policies with great success, a few, such as Hong Kong, have been able to get away with almost no formal policies, relying instead on market forces alone[4]. However, most people will agree that due to the unique circumstances surrounding Hong Kong, its experience is not appropriate as a model for developing countries. In other countries, it has been difficult to gain enough support and enthusiasm for national information policies, probably because information is such an intangible resource. Also, the costs of establishing an adequate information infrastructure is prohibitive and there are always many other more pressing political and social needs, especially in countries where

resources are scarce. The lack of political will is also a major limiting factor.

There are, however, many examples of benefits to be derived from establishing such policies. Singapore is an example of what can be done if policies are put into place to deal with information issues. It has achieved spectacular success on the economic front and has in place a "strong encompassing framework of information policies" that will enable the strategic utilization of information. Singapore sees this as a key factor in their strategy of "investing in a learning nation".

According to Nick Moore, "most countries fall between these two extremes"[5]. Most countries try to use market forces within a policy framework to exploit information resources for economic development. He believes that the reasons for this middle road are:

- The magnitude of changes is such that governments do not want to depend on market forces alone.
- Huge investments are required and governments must be prepared to commit public funds rather than to rely only on the private sector.
- Governments recognise that the long-term social impact can either strengthen or destroy society and "are not prepared to stand aside and simply observe".

As mentioned above, the lack of an effective information policy can have negative effects that may have long-term disastrous effects on society. For example:

- Information services will end up costly, disjointed, and only select audiences will benefit;
- Duplication of information services may arise;
- Inequalities in society will increase (e.g. disparity between rich and poor, information rich and information poor, developed and developing, etc.);
- Employment opportunities may decrease;
- Opportunities for the illegal use of information, especially personal information (hence loss of privacy) will arise;
- There will be increased availability of offensive materials, especially by those seeking to make profits;
- People's right to information may be restricted;
- There may be loss of control and revenue (e.g. copyright piracy);
- Cultural heritage concerns may be neglected.

Initiatives in Fiji

Here in the South Pacific, we are also becoming aware of the need for national information policies and our governments are beginning to give due recognition to this, though not yet in concrete terms.

From 1995-1996, the Fiji Library Association was involved in the SISNAP (Study on the Information Infrastructures for Planning Information Systems and Networks in Asia & the Pacific Countries) Project, in association with UNESCO PGI (Bangkok) and Monbusho (Japan). The project served to raise awareness amongst FLA members of information infrastructure issues and the relevance of national information policies.

In November 1998, this initiative was followed by a Conference on the National Information Infrastructure, co-sponsored by FLA and Unesco. The Conference concluded with a very strong recommendation for a National Information Policy for Fiji. It was felt that such a policy

would provide a framework for decision making in matters of information for the whole country. The participants identified the following as major areas to be addressed by a National Information Policy:

- As there are multiple information sectors, there should be as many subsections of the national information policy statement as there are information sectors;
- It should recognise the centrality of libraries in the provision and delivery of information services to all members of society. Libraries should be empowered to be focal points of excellence for information of all kinds;
- The Policy should provide for the transformation of governance of the institutions delivering library and information services. It was felt that library services in Fiji remain basic, uncoordinated and unplanned and much more must be done to improve library services in Fiji. In particular, the meeting urged the government to establish a National Library for Fiji;
- Communications policy is a very important component of the National Information Policy and government is urged to institute affordable telecommunications rates as a priority.

The Fiji Government has so far not addressed the issue of national information policy specifically, despite pressures exerted by organisations such as the Fiji Library Association. Some areas are being addressed (e.g. a Copyright Act was passed in 1998 after a long gestation period, to comply with WTO conditions), but not in a co¬ordinated way.

Stakeholders in the economic and commercial sectors, as well as regional and international organisations such as the Forum Secretariat and the World Bank, have exerted some pressures that have resulted in awareness of the issues and some initiatives being put in place. The efforts by the Forum Secretariat are outlined below. In 1995, the World Bank initiated a Knowledge Assessment Project that involved several South Pacific countries, including Fiji. Following these initiatives, the Fiji Government established a committee to address information issues. Membership included government and non-governmental representatives, but the Library profession was a prominent omission. As stakeholders we have not seen any visible developments, for libraries in Fiji remain in a dismal state.

The Information Technology Centre of the Fiji Ministry of Finance has also expressed its view that information and knowledge is a key factor that is "unstated" in Fiji. In a paper entitled *Towards a creative nation: shaping Fiji's future: economic opportunities through information technology*, it "solicits guidance and approval ... to formulate a strategic plan towards the development of an information infrastructure"[6]. They have recommended a comprehensive study and design of Fiji's information infrastructure to be carried out. Although the preamble of the paper recognises that "Fiji is not just budgets and business" and that "we are a people with cultures, historical heritage, physical assets and opportunities"[7], the recommendation focuses only on economic aspects. Whilst such recommendations are positive, they must go further than just looking at economic and commercial issues alone.

It is encouraging to note that the new government now in place has begun to look beyond the narrower issues. Its Year 2000 Budget has given some prominence to the development of school library services and we hope that the Education Commission will deal with the matter more extensively. We hope also that the problems of libraries in general will be addressed within the wider national policy framework.

Regional Initiatives
On the regional inter-governmental level, the Forum Secretariat is coordinating an important

project on the formulation of a regional strategy for information and communication policies. In 1998, they commissioned a study by the Parsons Galloway Foundation entitled Pacific Island Involvement in the Global Information Infrastructure. The report was a follow-up to the World Bank's Knowledge Assessment exercise and highlighted the "potential marginalisation of Pacific island countries from global trends" if information issues are ignored. It called for debate on the issues so that "an information and transparent policy framework is to be developed". A series of regional ministerial conferences have been held, involving representatives at the highest governmental levels.

At a meeting held in April 1999, regional representatives issued an Action Plan and A Vision for the Pacific Information Economy. The document[9] "recognises the significance of the Global Information Infrastructure to the region's future economic and social development ... and the complementary role of regional co-operation". The meeting reaffirmed its commitment towards an Asian Pacific Information Infrastructure (APII) and universal access to its benefits.

The following objectives and strategies were adopted:

- Facilitating the construction and expansion of an interconnected and interoperable information infrastructure across the region;
- Encouraging technological co-operation between Forum member countries in the development of the information infrastructure;
- Promoting free and efficient flow of information;
- Furthering the development of human resources;
- Encouraging the creation of policy and regulatory environments favourable to the development of the Pacific information economy.

Whilst the Forum Secretariat's initiative is a commendable one, it has tended to concentrate only on telecommunications issues. All the meetings held so far have focussed on telecommunications concerns such as the needs to reduce the costs of telecommunications services throughout the Pacific, to promote competitive telecommunications markets, and to develop a co-operative approach to telecommunication regulation. Whilst these are important issues, there is a need to debate on wider information issues. As with the Fiji initiatives, the perspective of other information service providers such as libraries were not addressed.

Hence, the Fiji Library Association presented a submission urging delegates to recognise libraries as active partners to the regional information strategy, highlighting the potential of libraries to take on a leading role in information policy development. The paper informed participants that libraries can move beyond their traditional services of collecting, preserving and disseminating printed materials and have the potential to function as effective hubs in the emerging interconnected information networks. Libraries can develop programmes to support economic competitiveness, improve education effectiveness, increase intellectual productivity, enhance technological progress, and improve political stability[10].

We hope that the paper has made some impact on the vision of the Pacific Information society. For our part, we as library professionals, must recognise that libraries are being presented with a unique opportunity to take on a significant role in the strategic provision of that invaluable economic resource "information" and we must seize the opportunities before it is too late.

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Footnotes

[1] *European Commission White Paper*, 1993.

[2] Moore and Steele (1991)

[3] Montviloff, Victor (1990), p.5

[4] *World Information Report 1997/1998*, p. 282

[5] Moore (1997), p. 282

[6] *Towards a creative nation: shaping Fiji's future: economic opportunities through informa-tion technology*. Concept paper (draft) (1998), p. 5

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Primary School Libraries in Fiji and the Problems they Face

Melvyn D. Rainey

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the state of libraries in primary schools in Fiji. Specifically it seeks to identify the status of problems faced and overall development of libraries since Ragni's study in 1978/79. Finally it will make a number of recommendations for the future in the specific areas of physical facilities, training, teaching, collection development and services.

Literature Search

In 1978/79, a study of primary and secondary school libraries was carried out by Ragni for the Ministry of Education. Ragni's study covered 750 schools and 67% of the schools replied to the questionnaire. Ragni found the basic problems facing libraries were: a lack of budgets, a lack of trained people, overall small collections and a lack of space. Ragni was however overall positive in his remarks about the growing interest in the development of libraries.

A study of secondary school libraries in Fiji, in 1991, was carried out by Rainey. Rainey's study had a 78% return for the questionnaire. The 1991 study found that the number of secondary school libraries have increased but the problems that were commonly faced by Ragni's study were still the basic problems plaguing libraries in the 1990s.

Although these two studies are the only ones that specifically cover libraries there have been a number of other studies carried out on reading and publishing in the South Pacific which all have had implications for good school libraries. Elley and Mangubhai (1980) wrote a report on the Fiji Book Flood which stated in its recommendations that importance of a central school library where children have access to books if their reading was to improve. A 1982 study by Ricketts stressed the importance of developing a strong collection of well written and well illustrated stories for children if there is to be an improvement in language, writing and reading. The 1986 study on publishing in the South Pacific by Williams stressed among other things the need for well illustrated books with good plots to be written for children.

Elley (1994) speaking at an International Reading Conference discussed how New Zealand teachers introduce children to literacy and he pointed out his own experiences through the Book Flood in Fiji. He noted that The International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) has supportive evidence both in New Zealand and internationally for the following policies:

- Large school libraries are associated with higher achievement;
- Large classroom libraries are also linked to better performance;
- More time spent on silent reading in school is characteristic of high achieving programs;
- More time spent on story-reading aloud by teachers is a positive experience for students.

The Questionnaire

The 1994 questionnaire was sent to 340 primary (elementary) schools with enrolments above 175 students. Enrolment figures were based on the 1993 school roles. Fifteen of the 340 schools indicated enrolment of less than 175 and were excluded from the study. Schools with enrolments of 175 or more fell into two categories, medium and large schools. Out of the total 325 schools, 245 answered the questionnaire giving a 75% rate of return. In dividing the

schools into rural and urban settings, it was found that 158 were rural and 87 were urban.
The questionnaire covered the following areas: school enrolment, number of teachers, whether
the school had a centralised library, classroom collections or no library facilities, if there was a
centralised library did it have the basic furnishings, tables and chairs, shelving, circulation
desk, etc. It was also asked if there was a person in charge of the library, what percentage of
time did the person spend in the library and did they have any specialized training. A section
of the questionnaire covered collection development, size and age of the collection and
budget. The last part of the questionnaire asked about the teaching of basic skills through plan-
ning and team teaching between the librarian and classroom teachers. This section also asked
whether or not special activities such as story telling, book discussions, reading stories to chil-
dren, etc., were carried out on in the library.

The last statement of the questionnaire asked the respondents to make any comments they felt
that were relevant to their particular situations. This was particularly an illuminating section as
there were many excellent and useful comments made by a large number of respondents.
Many of these comments have been incorporated into the conclusion of the study.

Education System and Some Problems Faced

Before we look at the results from the study that was undertaken, it is I believe both useful and
necessary for readers, especially international ones to have some understanding of the educa-
tion system and some of the problems it faces. For an expatriate from a developed country it
has not always been easy to understand the system. Traditions and customs are strong and so it
is never an easy matter to see changes made that would affect how things are done.

Types of Schools

Fiji has several types of schools, they are: committee run schools, religious schools, govern-
ment schools and private schools. There are 709 primary schools in the country, 695 are man-
aged by committees (Fiji Times: December 24, 1997). Committee schools may be set up by a
religious group, for example there are many Hindu-run schools under particular groups or
sects. Christian denominations like the Methodists, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Seventh Day
Adventist and Assemblies of God Churches also have schools throughout the country. As
well, schools organized and managed by the Muslim faith are also found in many parts of the
two major islands.

In some parts of the country one finds community schools which are not affiliated with any
religious groups. There are also a few schools which are financed and completely under gov-
ernment control and there are a few private schools. The largest of which is the International
School in Suva.

Although schools are managed by religious groups or committees they are inter-racial, inter-
social and inter-religious by law. For example, a school managed by the Catholic Church will
likely have children whose families belong to other denominations or religions other than
Christian, as well one usually finds an inter-racial mix within schools. It is true that some
schools may be predominantly Indian or Fijian but children cannot be discriminated against on
the basis of race or religion. There are no set school boundaries which parents must adhere to,
thus they have the right to send their children to any school they wish.

In government run schools the government is responsible for providing buildings and the cost
of the upkeep of the school. All schools with the exception of the International Schools re-
ceive a subsidy of $30.00 per student per year which is used to purchase materials and re-
sources for classrooms. Any other money that is required by the schools must be raised

through fund raising by the schools. Schools can apply for aid from the Ministry of Education to build new classrooms, toilet blocks, a bus shelter, canteen or improving the school compound. An application form must be completed, but that in itself does not mean aid will be forth coming. In any given year there may be a considerable number of applicants and school committees may find their application does not get approval.

Schools with the exception of the International Schools cannot charge school fees. However, schools carry out fundraising activities and parents are required to pay a building or maintenance fee each year. Fee structures vary from school to school and the amount charged may be by individual child or by family. Fund raising may be for any number of specific projects, including the purchase of sports equipment, team uniforms, science equipment, library books, building a library, etc. In the last few years there have been many complaints from parents about the amount of time spent on fund raising, in some instances, each student has been given a set amount to raise and parents are expected to *top off* amounts that are under the quota.

Classes of Teachers
There are different classes of teachers in the schools, while most teachers are part of the Civil Service, there is also a group known as grant-in-aid teachers. They're teachers hired on a yearly basis if they are needed and as positions open in the Civil Service they are taken in on a quota basis.

Since the Military Coups of 1987 there has been a consistent shortage of qualified teachers as many of the better qualified ones migrated overseas, mainly to Australia and New Zealand. Eleven years after the Coups the shortage of qualified teachers is still a serious problem. In an article entitled, "Schools in Trouble" (Fiji Times, February 1, 1998 page 1), the Fiji Teachers Union pointed out that there were not enough teachers in Fiji who are properly qualified to teach English and fill the vacancies in the schools. Similar headlines in the (Fiji Times January 29, 1998, page 1) stated that 150 teachers left teaching in 1997. Mr. Amraiya Naidu, Permanent Secretary of Education, stated that 72 teachers from primary schools had resigned in 1997 and that resignations were for better jobs or because they were migrating overseas. In Secondary schools many departments were left without Heads because there was a lack of qualified people to fill the positions.

Salary Differences/Class Size
Differences in salary situations between primary and secondary teachers is a problem. The President of the Fiji Teachers Union, in a newspaper article, stated the Ministry should remunerate primary school teachers who are qualified at the same rate as their counterparts in secondary schools, (Fiji Times, May 1, 1998, page 2). In the same article, it was pointed out that class enrolments, particularly in urban centres are very large. In the same issue of the Fiji Times, a Fiji Teachers Union study showed that 80% of the urban schools had more than 50 students in each class, thus making teaching extremely difficult. Indeed, studies in developed countries have shown that once class enrolment goes beyond 25 students, the quality of teaching and individual attention given to students suffers.

Teachers Unions
In Fiji, there are two teacher unions, the Fiji Teachers Union and the Fiji Teachers Association. The Fiji Teachers Union members are primarily Fiji Indians, although some indigenous Fijians do belong to it. The Fijian Teachers Association is also a Union and its members are primarily indigenous Fijians, although people of mixed race, Banabans and Rotumans are also members. Both unions are open to any teacher who wishes to join and while the unions are not based on race the two groups seem to be primarily divided along racial lines. It would seem

that one strong, united union would be in a better position to help bring about much needed change, however tradition and culture is strong and changes of this magnitude are only likely to happen in the distant future.

Examinations

Examinations have always played an important role in the education systems throughout the South Pacific. Indeed they tend to be the key factor in decisions made about students. Students who do not do well in examinations are likely dropouts and there is not much opportunity for them to further their education. National examinations are written at various levels in both primary and secondary schools. From the time students begin school in class one until they complete their secondary schooling they are faced with examinations. Tremendous pressure is put on both students and teachers. A good school is judged not just by the number of passes they have in the national examinations, but on the number of A grade passes they receive. Teaching for the purpose of passing examinations does not require well stocked libraries and qualified teacher librarians who work closely with students and teachers. The text book, chalk-board, a good set of notes and a teacher who drills students on facts has been all that is required for a reasonable degree of success in many schools.

In the past few years, there has been a growing number of teachers, professionals at some tertiary institutions as well as lay people who have begun to question the heavy emphasis placed on examinations. Education Minister, Taufa Vakatale, stated in the Fiji Times (May 3rd 1997, page 2) that examinations are a guide to assess performance of students and teachers but they have been misunderstood by those who restrict teaching to the passing of examinations. The President of the Fiji Teachers Union, Jagdish Singh states in the (May 1st, 1997 Fiji Times, page 2) that schools should do away with examinations and children should be equipped with life long learning skills, and a recently appointed Judge, speaking at the Fiji Teachers Union annual conference stated there was a great need to update teaching skills and the curriculum. He further stated that the revolutionary changes in technology instituted by the market, demands that the education system and teachers keep pace (Fiji Times May 1st 1997, page 2).

It is obvious these changes will not take place quickly, they will need to gain greater grass roots supports and financial support from the government. Leadership, careful planning, financial support and cooperation among the Ministry, teacher unions, school committees and the public at large will determine how quickly and how successfully the education system will change. All the problems mentioned in the preceding pages have played a part in keeping school libraries from making an important and positive mark on the education of students. The results of the questionnaire are in a number of instances related directly to some of the problems discussed in the previous pages.

Analysis/Results Of The Survey

The first section of the questionnaire attempted to find out the enrolment of the school, the number of teachers and if the school had library facilities. Tables one through four show this information.

Table 1. Enrolment

School Roll	No. of Schools	Percentage
175-200	72	29
201-400	102	42
401-600	41	17
601-800	18	7
801 -above	12	5
Total	**245**	**100%**

Table 2. Staffing

No. of Teachers on Staff	Number of Schools	Percentage
10 or less	153	62
11- 20	75	31
21- 30	16	66
Above 30	1	.4
Total	**245**	**100%**

Library Facilities

Respondents were asked whether their school had a separate room for the library at least the size of a regular classroom. If there was no separate classroom they were asked if the school had classroom collections. As shown in tables 3 and 4 the 245 schools were almost evenly divided on whether or not there was a centralised library.

Table 3. Separate Library Facilities'

Does the school have a separate room for the library?

No. answering Yes	No. answering NO	Percentage
125		**51**
	120	**49**

In table 4 respondents were asked if they had classroom collections. 62% stated they did. It would appear that some schools have both a centralised collection and classroom collections. The real concern is that 38% of the schools who answered the questionnaire have no library of any kind.

The questionnaire did not attempt to divide schools into rural and urban areas, however this was done with the help of Library Service of Fiji after the questionnaires were returned. Of the 245 schools who answered the questionnaire, 158 schools were in rural areas and the majority of schools without a library were in rural areas.

Table 4: Classroom Collections

If your school does not have a centralised library, are there classroom collections?

Yes	No	Total No. answering the question	Percentage answering YES	Percentage answering NO
74	46	120	62	38

Basic Equipment

In those schools that have libraries, basic equipment is often lacking, such items as tables and chairs, shelving, circulation (issue desk) card catalogue, storage area for pictures and audio visual materials. For example, 49% of the school libraries had no tables or chairs to sit at least 30 students at one time. Slightly less than one-third had insufficient shelving, roughly half had no circulation (issue desk) and just over 60% had no storage area for pictures, maps, audiovisual items, etc. It was interesting to note that close to 80% of the schools had either a duplicator or photocopy machine. Many of the urban schools have a simple catalogue although the great percentage of them are in poor condition. In many instances they have not been kept up-to-date. Although the question of having a computer catalogue was not asked on the questionnaire, to the best of the writer's knowledge only three schools in Fiji have a computerized collection, they are Yat Sen Secondary, International School and Latter Day Saints College. Stella Maris, a primary urban school in Suva of roughly 400 students, hopes to computerize its collection within the next three years. From the writer's knowledge of primary school collections it is one of the better ones in the country.

Training

Professional training to become a qualified librarian is offered through distance education at the University of the South Pacific. The program is available to the twelve countries within the University region. Training has been offered through the University since 1980. The University of the South Pacific Certificate in Librarianship was a vocational program offered from 1980-1993. In 1990 the Diploma in Library/Information Studies began and while it has been popular with both those who wished to upgrade their training form the earlier certificate as well as with the new students, the number of those selecting the school library option has not been as high as was originally hoped. Teachers who are in charge of libraries have not enrolled in significant numbers, nor have those who have no training of any kind enrolled in any great number. In reality the greatest number of candidates for the Diploma should be coming from the schools.

A new Certificate in Library/Information Studies Basic Skills began in Semester One 1998. Its purpose is to give students the basic skills to work under a librarian who has completed either

the now defunct U.S.P. Certificate in Librarianship or the Diploma in Library/Information Studies. The new Certificate does not train people to manage a library on their own. It is however hoped that the Certificate will upgrade students basic skills so that they can handle the Diploma program with success.

Table 5: Staff

Does your school library have a person in charge?

Yes	No	Percentage answering YES	Percentage answering NO
137	24	85	15

Table 5 indicates schools which have a person in charge of the library and the amount of time that person spends in the library. Table 6 indicates the amount of training that person has received.

Table 6: Time spent in Library

What percentage of time does the person spend on the library per day?

Less than 25%	26 - 50 %	51 -75%	76 - 90 %	100%
97 (69%)	20 (14%)	5 (4%)	3 (2%)	15 (11%)

Although 85% of those who said they had a person in charge of the library (Table 5) we see from Table 6 that 83% spend less than 50% of their time in the library. Even more discouraging is that 69% of them are in the library less than 25% of the time. If the school library is going to play a positive role in the education of students and if it is to help teachers improve their teaching skills then it must be open at all times of the day for students and teachers to use. A library that is locked or that is only open on an irregular basis is little more than a book storage room.

While 80% of the people who answered this question are qualified teachers, they are in charge of the library in name only because they are responsible for a classroom. From table 6 we say that 69% of them spend less than 25% of their time in the library. At the present time there is no provision in the education system which states schools must have libraries that are managed by qualified people. There is no attempt by schools to cut back on time a teachers spends in the classroom so that the person could spend more time in the library.

In the majority of cases the school committee allows the school to hire someone in the community, usually someone who has not completed secondary school and who can be paid a mere pittance to look after the library. Failing this, the office staff are expected to look after the library. One can sympathize with teachers who are asked to look after the library and carry a heavy teaching load. No one can serve two masters and do an effective job and most teachers, quite naturally, are likely to feel their first responsibility is to the students in the classrooms. Most students who are enrolled in the Diploma program are working in tertiary level institutions, public libraries and special libraries. These libraries are found in the urban areas

where salaries and working conditions are likely to be better.

Table 7: Library Training
What specialized training does the person in charge of the library have?

Teacher training but no library training	112 (80%)
Certificate in Librarianship or Diploma in Library/Information Studies	2 (1.5%)
Teacher training plus certificate or diploma	4 (3%)
Presently enrolled in diploma	2 (1.5%)
No training of any kind	20 (14%)

Like the secondary schools study found in 1991 the budget for primary (elementary) schools is woefully inadequate. It appears that schools which had either classroom collections or central-ised collections answered the questions on whether or not their school library had a yearly budget, hence the reason for the high number of responses.

Table 8: Budgets
The question asked does your school have a regular yearly budget?

Yes	No	Percentage Yes	Percentage No
60	139	30%	70%

When one sees that 70% of the 199 schools that answered the question have no regular budget to buy library materials it is easy to understand why collections are in such a disastrous state in a large majority of the schools.

Table 9: Amount of budgets in dollars

What is the budget amount per year schools that answered the question		Numbers of Percentage
Less than $1000	44	73
$ 1000-2000	9	15
$2001-3000	1	2
$3001-4000	3	5
$4001-5000	1	2
Above 5000	2	3
	60	100

Very few children's books are published in Fiji, or for that matter in the South Pacific. The Ministry of Education produces textbooks and workbooks for a variety of subjects in the primary schools but virtually all storybooks, picture books of good quality, information books on topics like dinosaurs, space, magnets, earthquakes, volcanoes, etc., for children as well as encyclopedias, dictionaries and yearbooks are imported. When this is considered it is easy to see the inadequacy of budgets. The recent 20% devaluation of the Fiji dollar in 1998, plus the high cost of shipping charges and the need for booksellers to have some margin of profit all means that an extremely small number of books can be purchased by most school budgets.

Collection Development

Insufficient budgets make it impossible to do an adequate job of developing the collection. Tables 10, 11 and 12 cover gifts, size of the collection and the age of the collection.

Table 10: Gifts

Does your school rely mainly on gifts in developing the collection?

Yes	No	Percentage Yes	Percentage No
173	61	74%	26%

Gifts come to schools mainly through overseas service clubs and directly from public libraries and schools. The greater majority of gifts are discards and while some materials are useful much of it is likely to be of little use. No library can develop a good collection, which will meet the users needs if it is primarily relying on gifts.

The question on the size of the collection included both the centralised and individual classroom collections. The only stipulation that they were asked to follow was not to include class sets of readers in their count. Table 11 below shows the actual size of the collections. A total of 78% of the schools have collections of less than 2000 titles. Considering that 71% of the schools (Table 1) have more than 200 students enrolled and 29% have more than 400 students, the collections in numbers alone are inadequate to meet the needs of students and teachers.

Table 11: Collection size

What is the total number of volumes in the collection?

No. of Volumes	Below 1000	1000 - 1999	2000-2999	3000-3999	4000-4999	Beyond 5000	Total
Number of Schools	121	49	24	15	2	6	217
Percentage	56	22	11	7	1	3	100

Table 12: Collection age

The questionnaire asked for an estimation of the relative age of the collection. Dates were given by decades.

No. of schools answering the question	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-	Total
	71	62	54	12	199
Percentage	36	31	27	6	100

Collections overall tend to be badly outdated and serve little purpose to students or staff. Statistical information in the non-fiction collection may well be out of date. Such statistics as population figures, agricultural income, economic growth figures, Gross National Product will be outdated. Sixty-seven percent of all the collections are pre 1979, which means the collections are more than 20 years old. Students are often given projects on a great variety of topics, for example, hurricanes, dinosaurs, sugarcane industry, space, gold mining, etc. Unfortunately these are all too often, the only directions that they are given. If their library doesn't have much material and they live close to a public library, they are told to use it to find some material. Unfortunately collections in public libraries are in much the same condition as school libraries. Only a small minority of students, primarily in urban areas, are likely to have access to reasonably up-to-date sources like World Book, Childcraft or a set of science encyclopedia for children.

As stated earlier, there is little money in budgets to purchase the kinds of materials school libraries need to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There are those who believe the new technology will solve the problem of having up-to-date information but for schools, with few exceptions, that is not likely to happen in the near or even reasonably near future. While libraries in the industrialized countries can afford the new technologies if they introduce them cautiously and judiciously, libraries in less industrialized countries will only introduce the new technologies as they become more affordable and the need for them can be justified. Few school libraries in Fiji or elsewhere have computerized their collections, indeed to my knowledge only three in Fiji have done this. They are urban schools in the capital and in each instance they have strong financial backing from either overseas support or from support groups who by and large are financially better off than the great majority of the public.

Reading Level of Materials
Three other questions asked about the collection were:

* Does the reading level of the materials in your collection generally meet the reading needs of students?
* Does your library/school have a set of encyclopedias that was new within the last ten years?
* Does your library have a children's dictionary and a children's atlas?

Table 13: Reading level of materials.
The questionnaire asked, does the level of materials in the collection meet the reading level of the students?

50% or less of the students needs	97 (54%)
51-75% of the students needs	45 (25%)
76-90% of the students needs	22 (12%)
Above 90% Percent	16 (9%)

A total of 79% of the students found that material in most collections did not meet their needs. There are several reasons why this is so but probably the major reason is that English is the second and sometimes the third language of children, and collections are predominantly in the English language. Williams (1986) stated there was a great need for works especially popular titles to be translated into the vernacular. As well she stated, the writing of storybooks, text-

books and reference books for children have been neglected for far too long and action needed to be taken to improve the situation. Table 10 showed that 74% of the schools that answered the question relied on gifts to develop their collections. A large part of collections in general cover topics which deal with environments and situations have little meaning for students. The government does publish and reprint textbooks and workbooks for schools but in many cases the content is badly outdated. The Institute of Education at the University of the South Pacific has made a valiant attempt to publish short, simple children's stories that are meaningful for children but unfortunately the demand is much greater than The institute is able to meet.

Bookstores in Fiji have a perilous existence. The cost of importing books from overseas is very high, plus the fact that by and large South Pacific countries are not a reading society. Good children's books are certainly not plentiful in the bookstores, simply because they are too expensive for the average person to purchase and those school libraries that have money to spend tend to shy away from books that are expensive. As a result they often end up purchasing titles which do little to satisfy the needs of children. The question which asked whether or not the school had a set of encyclopedia which was new within the past 10 years, was answered by 238 schools or 97% of the total number. A total of 86% of the schools answered no they did not have a new set of encyclopedia with the last ten years, in fact a large number of the schools said they had never had an encyclopedia set in the school.

The second part of the question asked for the name of the set of encyclopedia if the school had one. Overall 18 sets were named, World Book received 45% of the votes, Encyclopedia Britannica and Colliers received 11% and 9% of the votes and a specialized set called Growing up with Science received 7%. It was somewhat of a shock to see Colliers and Britannica being used in primary schools. 20% of the schools who had purchased or received the encyclopedia set as a gift, had the least useful encyclopedia for primary school students. The name Britannica carries a great amount of prestige in South Pacific countries and when schools have money to purchase an encyclopedia they often buy Britannica even when they are cautioned about the level of writing, amount of content, the lack of large coloured illustrations and the lack of ease in using the encyclopedia. Kister (1994) one of the leading experts on encyclopedias states that "physically", World Book is the best made encyclopedia in its class, and it is the best all-round encyclopedia for the family with school-age children. The last question on the section covering the collection asked if the collection contained a children's dictionary and a children's atlas. Overwhelmingly the answers were no, 67% and 73% respectively. Perhaps this question was not a good question to ask because most children are required to purchase a paperback dictionary and in some schools they are asked to purchase an atlas as part of their required texts.

Library Services/Programs
The last section of the questionnaire asked questions about basic services, they were:

- Does the library have scheduled classes on a weekly basis;
- are the following basic skills, skimming for information and note taking, using an index, and using a dictionary, taught by the librarian, the classroom teacher or do they work together as a team to teach these skills;
- does the librarian read to the children on a regular basis;
- do the librarian and the classroom teacher ever plan any projects or assignments so that students have to use resources in the library or community to complete the assignment?

To the first question 63% of those who answered the question said they did have regular scheduled classes. Schools which had classroom collections said there was one library period

per week where children read. In the centralized libraries the students used the period to do homework or read.

Answers to the questions on developing basic skills indicated that very little has been done in either the library or the classroom. The question on skimming for information and note taking showed that 70% of the students had not been taught how to do this, while the question on using an index to find information showed that 83% had not been taught how to use it. A total of 73% of students had been shown how to use a dictionary. Where these skills were taught it was the classroom teacher who did it. These basic skills are needed on a daily basis by students and the fact that students are not adequately prepared to use them easily is a damning statement on the education system.

The answer to the question 'did the librarian read to children on a regular basis' indicated that 85% of the librarians did not read to children. Roughly 30% of the questionnaires returned added that teachers read to students and in three cases the respondents stated that the entire school stopped work for 15–20 minutes everyday and everybody read during this period. This is certainly to be commended as it is important for students to see their teachers reading. With younger children, they are more likely to respond positively because of the role the teacher plays in their lives. As was mentioned in the first part of this paper, the studies done by people like Elley, Mangubhai & Ricketts, all pointed out the importance and the positive response gained from reading to children and having books in the classroom. The words of wisdom from these educationalists is slowly beginning to have some effect upon teachers in the South Pacific.

The question which asked if the librarian and classroom teacher ever plan projects/ assignments which require students to use the library to complete the assignment showed that only 160 schools answered this question and only 4% answered "yes". Thus 96% of the 160 schools stated there was not any cooperative work carried out between teachers and librarians. One can probably assume that the 85 schools which did not answer the question are not doing any regular planning either. This puts students at a great disadvantage as they move into the secondary schools and, tertiary institutions. From speaking with teachers and some parents, teachers do give students projects to complete, however, in the great majority of cases students are not given any guidelines to follow and as a result they are left floundering and end up copying from an encyclopedia or some other source. This last question is the key to the development of libraries and their value in schools. Unless we are able to teach students to use libraries effectively in the early years of their education then there is little hope that the greater majority of them will be users of libraries and seekers of information in later years.

Overview and Analysis of the Study

There are many reasons why school libraries are not playing the important role they should in the education of children. As the results of this study shows, the lack of training, inadequate and often in many cases non-existent budgets, outdated and small collections, lack of suitable space and equipment and a lack of understanding of the role the library should be playing in the education of children, are basic problems which must be sorted out if school libraries are to play a positive and effective role in education.

The Ministry of Education needs to give more direction to schools. There needs to be national standards set and enforced. The Ministry needs to work closely with teacher training institutions, teacher associations, teachers in the field, principals and head teachers, Library Service of Fiji, Fiji Library Association and the public in general to bring about a change in the role of school libraries and the attitude that exists. There is also a great need to make the curriculum

much more flexible and to put less emphasis on examinations. As long as examinations are used as the major criteria of whether children succeed or not, as they are at the present time, then teachers will continue to teach strictly for the purpose of passing examinations and they will slavishly follow curriculum guides. In regards to these problems the Ministry and the teacher associations must work especially closely with each other to bring about changes.

Teacher training institutions need to change their teaching methods or at the very least vary them, so that new beginning teachers are shown how to actively involve children rather than allowing them to be passive spectators. The textbook, chalkboard and notetaking do not encourage children to be actively involved, nor do they encourage children to ask questions. In fairness to teachers it must be pointed out that enrolments of 50 or more students in an over-crowded classroom do make it difficult to be creative in their teaching. This is a problem where the Ministry must intervene to limit classroom sizes especially in the urban areas.

Sixty four per cent of the schools who answered the questionnaire were rural schools and while nearly all primary schools are lacking good facilities and collections it is the rural schools which are at the greater disadvantage. Schools were given an opportunity at the end of the questionnaire, to add any comments if they so wished. One hundred schools did this and 80% of those were rural schools. Many of them restated the problems the study arrived at, for example, lack of a regular budget, small and outdated collections. One school mentioned they were able to buy some library books through the efforts of the teachers who run a school canteen and sell vegetable garden produce. Other schools mentioned fundraising through walk-athons. A large number of instances, teachers from rural schools which did not have a library service of any kind stated that students in the upper classes were at a great disadvantage when they moved into secondary school. Similarly a considerable number of schools made comments on the lack of support from Library Service of Fiji. Letters were allegedly written asking Library Service for support in setting up the library and either went unanswered or if help was promised, it never materialized. Overall one could not help but feel that the general morale in regards to libraries was at a low ebb. A number of schools mentioned the need for workshops to be offered to teachers who are in charge of libraries and for classroom teachers on how to use the library with their classes.

There was a desire on the part of teachers to know not only about the management of the library but also the kinds of activities they should be carrying out with students. In-service training is very important and it is obvious that such training is needed. The Ministry along with the teacher associations need to plan for this type of hands-on- training to be held on a regular basis. In a few cases schools complained about the lack of training programmes for librarians, this is indeed unfortunate. In 1995/96 a blanket mailing of the USP Diploma in Library/Information Studies Program brochure was sent to all schools. A 1997 mailing went to all University Centres in the region. Prior to the beginning of the new semesters, the programs are advertised in the newspapers in each of the twelve countries that make up the University region. This does not appear to be sufficient and we must consider other ways of informing those in the field. The study highlighted a number of existing problems and based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made.

Recommendations
1. The Ministry of Education must consider an overall long-term plan from seven to ten years to improve school libraries. The Ministry needs to work in close cooperation with the teacher associations in developing such a plan. Every two or three years an evaluation needs to be carried out on what has been accomplished within that time frame.
2. The curriculum needs to be revised and updated so that it is less rigid. The Ministry, the

teachers associations and representatives from the Library Service of Fiji and the Fiji Library Association could be made part of a committee to look at the role of the library and the librarian in our schools.

3. The Fiji Library Association and Library Service of Fiji need to become proactive in encouraging people to become qualified librarians in our schools. A beginning could be made by offering our services to do workshops or speak at teachers conferences and principals conferences which in turn would help to raise the level of understanding and importance of libraries in schools.

4. The University of the South Pacific which offers two programs, the Diploma in Library/Information Studies and the Certificate in Library/Information Studies Skills by extension studies must find new ways to make people aware of the programs. The USP Library and the Fiji Library Association should be involved in helping plan an advertising campaign.

5. The teachers' colleges must become much more aware of the role the library plays in the education of children in primary schools as well as secondary schools and beyond. The idea of team-teaching between the lecturer and the librarian, and the idea of setting projects where students are showed how to set guidelines, objectives and develop creative ideas for the students to follow up will inject enthusiasm and interest into both teaching and learning.

6. Principles and Head Teachers must be actively involved in supporting the library and the librarian in their schools if services to staff and students are to improve. As the leader of the school, the principal is the key to success of any program.

7. Librarians must take a much more proactive role in getting the principal and staff to understand what the library can do for the staff and students. They must keep the principal/head teacher informed of the needs of the library and what is happening in the library. They must understand their role and be able to explain it to others. They must be considered an integral part of the staff. This is why it is important for the librarian to be a trained teacher as well as have qualifications in library/information studies.

8. There is a very great need for budgets to be increased in all libraries. Although this cannot be done over a short period of time, it should be possible to accomplish it over a ten year period. The importance of a regular yearly budget cannot be overlooked. The 138 schools which said they had no budget should begin receiving a budget of $500 in 1999 and each year the budget should be increased by $500 plus the increased percentage cost of books. This may seem like a large amount of money but we must keep in mind that the cost of books increases every year and this amount of money will not buy many books.

9. Collection development requires special attention if the collection is to meet the needs of the students, staff and the curriculum. Because the cost of selection aids is high, schools cannot afford them. An alternative solution would be for Library Service of Fiji to have a good selection of the basic aids and with leadership from Library Service and a committee of librarians from urban schools, some basic book lists in the various subject areas that would better meet the needs of the curriculum could be prepared and sent out to the various schools. The lists should contain author, title, publisher and price. A list of publishers' addresses could also be sent, or books could be ordered through a company like T.B. Clarke which has an office & warehouse in Nadi.

Conclusion

Since Ragni's study in 1979, School libraries at the primary level have increased in number. However for the greater majority the standard is poor if we accept the findings of this study. While it is obvious the problems are many, they are not insurmountable. There is a great number of talented human resources in the field of education and libraries who are willing and able to play an important and active role in bringing about change. Teachers and librarians must take a proactive role in pressing forward the need for better libraries. We must convince those

in our profession who believe there is no hope that they are wrong. We must convince school committees and parents that change must come if we are to move into the 21st century with any hope of improving and meeting the new challenges that will face us. Lastly, we must convince our leaders, the Ministry of Education, that they have a leadership role to play and that we are there to support them. We cannot afford to short-change our children's education if we hope to prepare them to be good citizens and leaders of their community and country.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Judy Taligalu McFall-McCaffery (nee McFall-Ma'ilei) is the Pasifika Liaison Librarian, Maori & Pasifika Services at the University of Auckland. Her role involves developing and delivering library support services and initiatives for Pasifika students and staff at university, and assisting research with Pacific content. Judy is Samoan, and in librarianship since 1981in Tonga where she and her family lived for 20 years. She did her first degree in Administration and Politics, a certificate, and a diploma in Library and Information Studies with the University of the South Pacific. She currently completed an Arts Postgraduate degree in Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland, and is pursuing further studies examining policy, practices and Pacific perspectives. She is interested in effective delivery and support services strategies that are relevant and enhance Pasifika learning, teaching & research at University. Judy is co-founder and convener of the Pasifika Information Management Network (PIMN), a Special Interest Group of LIANZA. Her other passion is the maintenance of Pacific languages and its place in education, and currently working with communities to have Pacific languages officially recognized as minority languages of New Zealand. She and husband John are blessed with 6 children and 6 grandchildren.

Carol Curtis has been involved in the educational and environmental fields in the Marshall Islands. She is a member of the Bahá'í International Community.

Sam Kaima is *Senior Lecturer*, Archives and Records Management, at the University of Papua New Guinea. He has published widely on PNG libraries, archives and information management and on PNG cultural heritage issues.

Sin Joan Yee is the University of the South Pacific Deputy Librarian (Technical Services) since 1998. She is responsible for Technical Services (Acquisitions, Gifts and Exchanges, Cataloguing, and PIC). She has worked in all sections of the Library, but spent longest periods in Cataloguing and Library Systems. Joan holds Bachelor of Arts from the University of the South Pacific, Post-graduate Diploma in Librarianship form Polytechnic of North London, and Master in Business (Information Technology) from RMIT University.

Melvin Rainey received his BEd from University of Sasketchwan, Canada and Master of Librarianship from University of Washington, Seattle, USA. He has taught at all three levels, primary, secondary and university. He has 45 years of experience in the field of teaching and librarianship. His special areas of interest in librarianship are censorship, school libraries and distance education. Melvin has published several articles and completed three research studies.