The Department of Education’s Mission Statement – *Education: An Investment In Samoa’s Future* – illustrates the importance of education to nation building. Without education, all other forms of development – economic and social – are ineffective.

Education is a key priority of the Government of Samoa with its commitment to improving the quality of education for all learners in terms of equity, efficiency, quality of academic achievement and relevance to individual and national needs. This is outlined in the *Statement of Economic Strategy*, the Government’s primary economic planning document, and reinforced in the *Education Policies and Strategies Plan*. In order to set future educational goals and directions for the years 1995 – 2005 and further, the Education Policy and Planning Development Project developed two key documents, *Education policies 1995 – 2005* and *Education Strategies 1995 – 2005*. Guided by these documents, the Department of Education has set its course and directions for the overall development of a meaningful education system which will continue to serve the nation well into the 21st century.

If education in Samoa is to meet the demands of an evolving society and developing economy, it is essential that the key elements of equity, quality, relevance and efficiency are present throughout the system. The *Education Strategies* document has been prepared with this in mind and attempts:

- to establish both medium and longer-term planning initiatives;
- to analyse infrastructure, curriculum, staff training and management needs, and
- to identify ways of translating the plan into action.

To facilitate the implementation of the strategic plan one or more component projects have been identified in eight educational-activity areas: early childhood, primary, secondary, special-needs, teacher education and training, post-secondary education and training, departmental and school management.

I shall give a brief account of some of the major education development projects that are in progress:


This project is jointly planned and conducted by the Governments of Australia and Samoa. The overall goal of the Primary Education Materials Project (PEMP) is to improve the quality of learning outcomes and teaching processes in Years 4-8 in the areas of social science, mathematics, science, English and Samoan.

The following specific objectives are targeted by this project in order to achieve the above goal:

a) Produce well-designed student booklets in the areas of social science, science, mathematics, English and Samoan for students in Years 4 to 8, a monolingual dictionary for students and teachers in Years 7 and 8 and a Samoan grammar book for all primary teachers.

b) Promote the use of educational broadcasts in all core subjects for students in Years 4-8 using the new booklets, and for Year 7 and 8 students and teachers using the monolingual dictionary.

c) Supplement the locally produced science, English and Samoan language materials by procuring limited
quantities of basic science equipment and off-the-shelf English and Samoan readers.

d) Promote the use of project materials in schools through a program of short in-service courses tied to the distribution of the materials.

e) Promote the professional development of Curriculum Development Unit staff and Educational Broadcasting Unit staff through a combination of on-the-job training provided through their interaction with Australian advisers, short-term training attachments in Australia or the Pacific Region, and short computer courses in Samoa.


This project is jointly planned and conducted by the Governments of New Zealand and Samoa and managed by EDAP (Educational Development of Asia and Pacific). The overall goal of the Samoa Secondary Education Curriculum and Resources Project is the enhancement of the quality and delivery of secondary education throughout Years 9-12.

The following specific objectives are targeted by this project in order to achieve the above goal:

- The development of a single stream curriculum framework for Years 9-12,
- The development and publication of subject curriculum statements in each of core and applied subjects for Years 9-12,
- The development and publication of materials which improve the quality and delivery of education by supporting the subject curriculum statements,
- The provision of in-service training to introduce the single stream curriculum and the materials that support it;
- The transfer of skills and knowledge to DOE staff to enable the quality of materials and production to be improved.

3. Institutional Strengthening Program

This is a five-year project funded by AusAID and managed by Overseas Projects Corporation of Victoria with Extraskills and the Department of Education of Victoria as associated organisations. The project was launched on May 20, 1999.

The program goal is:

to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Department of Education so that learning opportunities and outcomes for Samoan children will be substantially improved.

The purpose of the program is:

to transform the Department of Education’s capacity to develop and implement corporate and management plans, in accordance with the Government of Samoa’s policies. Central to this purpose is the enhancement of management skills of department staff and the improvement of all existing business practices, work processes, structures and systems.

A key element of the program will be building and strengthening the management of the sector, and of key stakeholder relationships, including the tertiary education sector, early childhood, special needs education and mission and private education.

4. Augmenting Institution for General Attainment (AIGA Project)

This project is a three year project funded by UNDP and is implemented jointly by
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Education and UNESCO. The project aims at strengthening education at all levels and facilitating linkages between levels. Within this context UNDP assistance will aim at contributing to a significant improvement in the organisation and content of early childhood education. It will strengthen primary school teaching for literacy and numeracy skills with a study of Samoan as a language of instruction and with the development of diagnostic programmes and intervention strategies for learning deficiencies. The strengthening of special needs education curricula and facilities is also proposed. Finally the establishment of the National Authority to set and monitor training standards in the country is proposed as a means of strengthening linkages between secondary and post secondary educational and vocational training institutions.

The program support objectives are:

- To implement strategies under policy recommendations in Early Childhood Education which would foster stronger links with NGOs and ensure complementarity with UNICEF and other donor assistance to the subsector.

- To contribute to a significant improvement in primary education in literacy and numeracy skills through a study of the use of Samoan as a medium of instruction at primary level and the preparation of policy recommendations and implementation strategies on bilingual literacy methodologies.

- To consolidate the Basic Education and Literacy Support programme with the development of diagnostic measures and intervention strategies for literacy and numeracy learning deficiencies.

- To conduct a survey to identify special needs requirements which would assist with special needs curricula and facilities, including the improvement of the quality of training of special needs teachers and the identification of the roles of the key players in special needs education.

- To assist in the establishment of the National Training Authority to provide the government with advice concerning the developmental requirements of post secondary education and training in Samoa, and to set and monitor training standards in the country through the identification of the most appropriate model and pre-requisite needs.

5. Infant Primary Materials Project

This is a new project in the pipe-line and is an extension of the PEMP. The project will be funded by AusAID and managed by Macquarie Research Ltd. The overall aims of the project are:

- the production of good quality infants’ curriculum materials which focus on the integrated units in the Years 1-3 curriculum materials,

- the strengthening of the capacity within the Curriculum Development Unit and the Educational Broadcasting Unit for the continued production of such materials,

- the provision of in-service and pre-service training to support the introduction of the new materials.

6. Secondary Education Project

Science Resources – Laboratory Infrastructure

The project aims to upgrade laboratory facilities for 22 Junior Secondary Schools by the provision of science equipment through World Bank assistance. The materials and equipment are in the process of being packaged and shipped. Teachers will be trained on the proper
use, care and maintenance of the equipment before it is distributed to schools. This will enhance science teaching and learning in the junior secondary schools.

**Library Resources – Upgrading library facilities**

Twenty-two junior secondary schools and four mission schools will be supplied with books through assistance from the World Bank. The orders have just arrived and they will soon be supplied to schools. Better-equipped library facilities will improve literacy levels and enhance reading and learning.

As these projects are being successfully implemented, Samoa can face the 21st century with confidence and sure steps. Samoa will have better prepared teachers in the classrooms equipped with well-designed instructional materials, improved facilities, equipment and resources. It is also expected that access to secondary education will be increased considerably.

**References**

Western Samoa. Educational Policies 1995-2005


