Educational Planning in the Pacific: principles and guidelines

Chapter 9

Educational planning in the Pacific: a way forward
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How do we move the discussion forward from conceptualising a Pacific way of planning to operationalising the principles of planning, the benchmarks, and the lessons learnt from the case studies? And how do we maximise data utilisation in educational planning? Where do we go from here?

This workshop has reviewed several key ideas about educational planning in the Pacific. The intention has been to present a Pacific way of planning in education that will bring together what is best of Pacific and global practices. Throughout this exercise the premise has always been that Pacific values are central to the process of educational planning. Without this, educational planning in the Pacific will remain foreign and will fail to benefit children of the Pacific—who, after all, are intended to be the first rank of beneficiaries.

What does it all mean?

In the opening chapters Bob Teasdale and Priscilla Puamau presented exciting and thought-provoking ideas about educational planning in the Pacific. Reflections brought forward in these two chapters question old notions of planning and assumptions about existing educational structures.

A Sea of Islands

Bob Teasdale entreats a careful and critical questioning of colonial assumptions about the Pacific and its educational needs. He recalls Hau‘ofa’s (1993) concept of ‘a sea of islands’ emphasising a holistic approach to thinking about Pacific people and their endeavour to share the ocean that is within—‘Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean’ (ibid.: 16)—the ocean within us. And the ocean that is of them—‘people from the sea, kakai mei tahi’ (ibid.: 8)—people of the ocean.

This concept of a ‘sea of islands’ brings to light several of the key ideas that the PRIDE Project wishes to encourage in our thinking about educational planning in the Pacific. In thinking about the ‘ocean within us’ it recognises Pacific people’s
strong sense of spirituality, sense of belonging and sense of connectedness with nature. These beliefs, particularly spirituality and connectedness to nature (ocean and land), are the core of Pacific people’s identities. It means that Pacific people through their identification with nature are connected to their ancestors who have come before them and their children who will come after them. This sense of identification reflects a way of thinking that is interconnected rather than fragmented, where knowledge is passed on from one generation to another. And in the process of transmission, knowledge evolves, thereby recognising each generation’s contribution to weaving this Pacific mat of knowledge. In such a way of thinking there is recognition of a unity of knowledge. This way of thinking is broadened by the subsequent concept of ‘people of the ocean’. The strong sense of connectedness to nature is enlarged to include a sense of connectedness to all other people who share the same ocean. It is an engulfing and inclusive belief about being, and about being with others. It recognises the centrality, for Pacific people, of social relationships. Such social relationships exhibit all that is significant to Pacific cultures—predominantly values of respect and reciprocity.

When Bob Teasdale brings to mind Hau‘ofa’s concept of our ‘sea of islands’ he argues for Pacific educational planners to centre their planning in Pacific epistemologies—Pacific ways of thinking and knowing. Interestingly enough, as he points out, current global thinking is increasingly being driven by poststructuralism and post modernism. A Pacific way of thinking recognises the relativity of knowledge, the reality of the spirituality, and more holistic and integrated ways of thinking and knowing. Similar concepts can be identified in Hauʻofa’s ‘sea of islands’ and it is within this point of overlap that staff of the PRIDE Project hope that educational planners may construct a Pacific way of planning that captures the essence of Pacific core values and best practices that can be integrated with current global thinking.

Principles and benchmarks

To begin this obviously challenging task, participants from 15 Pacific countries came together during PRIDE’s first regional workshop in Lautoka to work on principles they thought would be pertinent to educational planning in the Pacific. Additionally, they finalised a list of draft benchmarks that they agreed were essential to constructing strategic plans for Pacific education systems.
Priscilla Puamau in her chapter presents a comprehensive summary of agreed principles of planning, as well as the benchmarks constructed during the workshop. I will not dwell much on this list as she has already raised several thought provoking questions regarding assumptions about the consultation process, use of foreign consultants and donor assistance. However, I would like to draw attention to several key principles of planning—namely values, vision and leadership—comment on what they mean, and suggest implications for educational planners to ponder upon.

Values

Much discussion has centred on principles of planning and Pacific values, but what do values mean? Why is it important that the principles of planning be based on Pacific values? Values and principles are concerned with people’s belief systems, cultural identities, ideas and behaviours that are intrinsically desirable. While the subject of human values is often left to theologians and philosophers to ponder, it exists within every realm of our daily lives. Our values define how we see the world, how we relate to those around us, and how we perceive ourselves in our various social roles. Subsequently, certain values come to define social, political and economical structures in our broader societies. Education is one such organisation that is loaded with values, from its organisational structures, to its classroom practices, to the curriculum that we teach our children.

Workshop participants identified such values as respect, reciprocity, spirituality, importance of land, environmental and social sustainability, relationships, participation/consultation, capacity building, resourcefulness, accountability, practical and context-specific training, consensus, ownership and good leadership as pertinent to educational planning in the Pacific. The list may seem exhaustive, but the components vary from personal and social values such as respect and spirituality to more organisational values such as accountability and capacity building. Similarly, the list includes traditional Pacific core values such as respect and reciprocity as well as emerging global values such as sustainability and accountability.

Taufe‘ulugaki (2002: 19) argues that one of the core challenges for Pacific education today is to clarify:
The value systems that have come to define education in the Pacific are based largely on western philosophies of education. The value dissonance that exists between western-derived values in our educational structures and our Pacific social values continues to foster inequalities and marginalisation in our society. Research recently conducted on the decision-making processes of Tongan principals highlights the value dissonance that exists between organisational policies and those espoused by the community (Fua, 2001). Taufe’ulungaki (2002) argues that this value dissonance needs to be resolved. She points out that continued efforts to introduce good governance and better accountability, to create more ‘democratic’ organisations, to ensure sustainability and more resources, and to develop appropriate policy frameworks, will remain ineffective, as these activities are simply perpetuating the very system they try to improve.

It is with this in mind that, as educational planners and policy makers, we come to think more critically about the values that underpin our educational structures, processes and programmes.

There is an understanding that Pacific cultures to a large extent share common core values. Such core values include relationships, respect, reciprocity, participation, resourcefulness and the value of land. There is also the understanding that while Pacific people share common core values, there is variation in how each value is espoused through each culture. What is not always recognisable, however, is that there are value disparities within cultures and, more importantly for this discussion, there is divergence between societal values and organisational values. Findings from recent research on educational administration in Tonga illustrate tensions and conflicts that are directly caused by the value differences that often go undetected in our Pacific organisations (Fua, 2001; 2003). There is a need for further articulation of espoused social values and values within educational organisations. Further to this, it is essential to recognise that in any effort to align organisational values with societal values, the very process of value transfer should be reflective of Pacific epistemologies.
Vision and leadership

What is a vision worth pursuing? King Taufa’ahau Tupou I of Tonga once said that his ‘people will perish for the lack of knowledge’. Tupou I envisioned a learned people for his country. Over a century later, Tonga has successfully entrenched formal learning into its culture. Schooling has become an intrinsic value in Tongan society. Parents will sacrifice meagre financial resources to send their sons and daughters to the best schools in Tonga and to overseas universities to gain ‘ilo (knowledge) and become poto (skilled). King Tupou I’s vision has been realised.

Undoubtedly, others will ask ‘what type of knowledge has been achieved?’ And ‘at what socio-economic and political cost?’ Without doubt, there have been numerous problems along the way within the education system as well as in communities. Issues of assessment, curriculum, teacher education, administration, financing and others abound. But, at the end of the day, Tongans have cultivated a desire for ‘ilo and to be poto.

Priscilla Puamau, in her chapter, listed ‘Strong, objective and visionary leadership’ as one of the 12 principles of planning put forward by PRIDE participants. Participants at the Lautoka workshop recognised the importance of leadership to the process of planning and consequently the role that leadership plays in ‘the shaping of a vision for the organisation’. However, the principle of visionary leadership did not transfer over to the benchmarks listed in Puamau’s chapter. There are several reasons why visionary leadership should be further articulated and made deliberately apparent within any form of strategic planning.

Much of the literature on visionary leadership can be traced back to the ‘Effective Schools Movement’ in the 1970s. The argument behind this movement is that much of a school’s success depends on the principal’s leadership and attitudes about learning. Recent research, however, brings the focus to the visionary attributes of leaders and describes them as facilitators of the school community’s ‘collective vision’ (Rossow & Warner, 2000: 11). Visionary leadership is concerned with recognising and reflecting on the challenges of organisational change as well as embracing a learning culture. Visionary leadership is about critical reflection on what is real and projecting a better reality. Crucial to this type of leadership is the notion that the leader possesses a clear philosophical educational platform.

1. See page 20
(Rossow & Warner, 2000). The visionary leader must be clear about his/her personal and organisational vision, without which visionary leadership cannot be attained.

Is this the type of educational leadership we envision for our Pacific schools? If this was what we meant by ‘visionary leadership’ then we need to clarify what are our schools’ collective visions. The first step to such a task would then be for educational leaders to clarify their own personal vision and subsequently an organisational vision for the various organisations in their education system.

Vision building is an essential task to claiming ownership of any strategic plan. It involves not only the recognition of personal and organisational vision but also the collective vision of the entire community that has vested interests in the school. Central to vision building is consultation with stakeholders both within and surrounding the organisation. Nowhere else in the process of strategic planning is consultation more important than in the process of vision-building. When stakeholders—internal and external—recognise the vision as part of what they desire, then ownership of the plan begins to take place. When parents are convinced of the direction taken in their children’s education, they will support the plan at whatever cost.

However, the failure to build a clear collective vision further perpetuates one of the key struggles for Pacific education—‘lack of ownership by Pacific people of the formal education process’ and consequently the ‘lack of a clearly articulated vision for Pacific people’ (Taufe‘ulungaki, 2002: 2). Taufe‘ulungaki goes on to argue that:

because they [Pacific people] do not own the process, educational visions and goals tended to be defined by external sources, as is the case today and has been since the introduction of formal education. (2002: 2)

If we as educators are serious about taking ownership of our education systems as well as our strategic plans, we need to have a clearly articulated vision for our children and their learning in the Pacific.

Added to this, we also need to have a clear articulation of what educational leadership means for us in the Pacific. If we accept that vision building is central
to ownership of a strategic plan, then I would argue that leadership is the essential criterion for the achievement of the plan. There are several reasons why we should be more earnest in our endeavour to be clear in our definition of educational leadership for the Pacific.

First is our context for educational leadership. Most descriptive of our times is the demand for change—social, political and economic—from local, regional and global forces. The context within which educational leadership is being practised is, more than ever before, in a constant state of flux. The list of benchmarks and principles that has been constructed for strategic educational planning in the Pacific clearly reflects the various forces that are demanding our attention, especially the need to build pride in cultural identity while striving to teach skills for life and work in a global world.

On another front there is the push to align education strategic plans with national development plans as well as with regional and international conventions such as Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). There is also the need for capacity building while remaining fully cognisant of the limited budgets of local Ministries of Education, when their priorities are often far removed from the professional development of current staff. The continuing brain drain of capable teachers to other shores also is a continuing challenge. Similarly, there is the push for access and equity for special needs students as well as other minority groups, yet the reality is that even with the current school population, solutions to issues of access and equity have yet to be fully realised.

As educators we do not have to analyse the list of principles, nor the benchmarks we have constructed, to know the reality of our schools. Parents are demanding greater involvement in the education of their children. With increasing school fees, parents are also demanding an education that is relevant and worth their investment. Community expectations are also changing, demanding greater moral leadership from teachers and principals. Correspondingly, the nature of teaching and educational administration are also changing: while Ministries of Education are demanding greater ‘professionalism’ from teachers, incentives such as salary and other benefits are not at all forthcoming (Fua, 2003). And at the centre of all these concerns are the students. The students of today’s Pacific schools are not the same as those of 10 or 20 years ago. Television, internet, media, travel, satellite channels and a whole host of other global influences are all competing
highly successfully with parents and teachers for the attention of our children and youth.

For educational leadership to be contextual to the Pacific, the changing social, economic and political dimensions of our educational organisations and our schools need to be understood. The changing nature of the educational terrain demands that educational leaders—more than ever before—be convinced of their vision and their leadership. It is the commitment of Pacific educational leaders to their vision that will mediate global influence and protect local cultures in our schools. In today’s schools, educational leaders have to rise to the challenge and be the ‘gate keepers’ of our children’s futures.

Secondly, there is an urgent need for the development of Pacific educational leadership. Our educational leaders can no longer stand submissively while foreign consultants come and go, nor can they allow donor agencies to continue directing the next agenda. Neither can they just ‘talanoa’ by sitting around the kava bowl and paying lip service to ‘doing it the Pacific way’. Our educational leaders have to know more about the changing educational terrain at all levels, local, regional and global.

We can begin by asking what we mean by Pacific educational leadership. In my view it is fundamentally about relationships. Results from a recent study on Tongan educational leadership showed that:

> Principals’ conceptualisations of educational leadership are not only defined by their past socialisation processes but also in response to contemporary social and economical changes within Tongan society. Results of the study show that incumbent principals are changing their leadership practices, although slowly; there are changes in relationships with stakeholders and in decision-making processes . . . principals are recognising that it is within their relationships with stakeholders that they can draw strength to influence their leadership practices. (Fua, 2003: 353)

If we look back at the values that have been identified as those of the Pacific, we can clearly identify the centrality of ‘relationships’ to Pacific society. Similarly, if we recall Hau‘ofa’s (1993) ‘sea of islands’ it likewise speaks of the importance of relationships for Pacific people. Perhaps, then, in our attempt to define Pacific
educational leadership, be it at school or Ministry level, we may begin by thinking about relationships of principals and leaders with students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders.

Without doubt, much thinking and research need to go into finding conceptualisations and practices for Pacific educational leadership. Pacific academics must work closely with practitioners to develop this field. Areas such as problem solving, decision-making processes, communication strategies and relationship building demand all of our attention. Through the development of Pacific educational leadership, we will know more about leadership behaviour and, more importantly, gain significant insight into the mind of the Pacific educational leader. By taking a cognitive perspective to studying educational leadership in the Pacific, we will gain an understanding of why educational leaders make certain choices and use particular decision-making processes, and how they process information. Additionally, from a cultural perspective, we can gain greater insight into the tensions that exist within our education systems, tensions that reflect our struggle to merge local realities with global demands. By developing educational leadership through cultural perspectives we will also know more about the use of Pacific values and epistemologies that will guide our schools. I strongly believe that by equipping our educational leaders with the ‘right’ tools, we will be putting them in a better position to meet local demands as well as respond to the onslaught of globalisation.

**From conceptualisation to operationalisation**

There is a saying in Tonga: *koe lau pe ia* (it is just talk). How do we move from just talking about strategic plans to making them a reality? How do we move from conceptualisation to operationalisation of Pacific educational strategic plans? How do we ensure that our plans are reflective of the Pacific and that they are not just another imported crate of cheese from New Zealand, Australia or Europe?

**Fiji and Papua New Guinea Case Studies**

Earlier chapters by Epeli Tokai and Uke Kombra present case studies of recent educational planning in Fiji and Papua New Guinea. Each shows a response to unique demands within the particular country. The Fiji study reflects the Ministry of Education's attempt to recapture a plan that had been hijacked by politicians.
Fiji’s case reminds us of the various forces that can play havoc with even the best laid plans. The size and diversity of Papua New Guinea always present the local educator with interesting challenges, challenges that other Pacific Island states can look to for insight in addressing their own problems. Uke Kombra’s chapter provides a comprehensive outline of an approach to provincial planning for Papua New Guinea, and much can be learnt from it.

The case studies gave me an opportunity to reflect on the operationalisation of the espoused principles of planning and subsequent benchmarks in the planning process. There are several points I would like to highlight from the case studies. Central to both of them is the need for consultation, and I wish to probe this a little further. Uke Kombra in his chapter also talked about monitoring and evaluation, and I would like to reiterate the importance of this phase in any planning cycle. I would also like to add to the discussion two other points for consideration: learning organisations and building relationships.

**Communication strategy**

If there is one concept that is evident throughout the discussion on principles of planning and the development of benchmarks, and reiterated in the case studies, it is that of consultation. ‘Consultation’ seems to be in vogue at the moment. The process of consultation seems to be the justifying mechanism for ‘democratic process’, ‘ownership’ and ‘doing it the right way’. Unfortunately, as evident in the case studies and in other discussions in this book, consultation seems to occur either at the very beginning of the process of planning, or sporadically at various stages during it. The consultation process seems to be mainly with stakeholders outside of the organisation, with less consideration given to internal stakeholders.

My concern here is that we talk about consultation and all its supposedly ‘saving graces’, but we do not factor in ‘consultation’ as a systematic component of planning. By developing the process of consultation as a component of planning, we give due recognition to the importance of information usage within organisations as well as internal and external communication. Consultation when regularised, focused and fully incorporated into the administration of the organisation can be articulated through a communications strategy.
A communications strategy is a way to utilise and systemise information gathered through consultation and other forms of communication, in order to operate a plan. To operationalise a plan, to turn the plan from paper into activities, it is essential that an organisation set up a communications strategy. A communications strategy will not only breathe life into a plan but, more importantly, will manage the flow of information, which is the lifeblood of any organisation. Without information people are not connected to organisational visions, plans and goals, and consequently are disconnected from the organisation. Information can be empowering, thus encouraging engagement, loyalty and commitment, but it also can be disempowering, resulting in disengagement, detachment, indifference and lack of commitment.

The setting up of a communications strategy should be seen as one of the initial phases of a plan, thereby providing direction for remaining activities. A communications strategy can be closely aligned with the vision and guiding values and principles of the overall plan. The communications strategy should clearly recognise the different levels of communications that operate within a given organisation: external, internal, informal, formal, horizontal, vertical, explicit and implicit. The communications strategy also should recognise the different tools and modes of communication used within the organisation as well as the different venues where communication takes place. With a comprehensive communications strategy tailor made for it, an organisation will be able to gather relevant, timely and often hidden information.

A communications strategy is to be differentiated from the gathering of statistical data as described in earlier chapters by Rebecca McHugh and ‘Uhila Fasi. These data are particular to quantitative analysis of the outcomes of the education services that are provided. The communications strategy suggested here is particular to the everyday operation of the organisation. It will give educational administrators insights into processes that eventuate in outcomes based data.

Information gathered through a communications strategy will add depth to the analysis of end result data collected about enrolment, assessment, retention and teacher movement. With a well set up communications strategy, trends in teacher movement and student retention as well as other movements within the organisation can be detected earlier. With a well-defined communications strategy an educational leader will know how to resolve a conflict before he/she receives a letter of resignation from a teacher, at which point there is little he/she could do.
One of the principles listed in earlier chapters is the need for our educational plans to be flexible and realistic. I think that with a clearly defined communications strategy information can be filtered through to inform educational planners and leaders on what is real and what is not within their plan. Further to this, educational administrators may also get a sense of how flexible they may need to be in response to emerging issues. A well-defined communications strategy will help keep the plan flexible, real and sensitive to a changing terrain. It will not only inform planners of how the plan is being implemented, but it will also inform educational leaders on many fronts, particularly in problem solving and making decisions. Informed leaders make informed decisions.

Building relationships

Crucial to the setting up and operation of a communications strategy is the building of relationships within and outside the organisation. We of the Pacific do not have to look too far to see the benefits that are brought about when relationships are harmonious within our extended families and communities. When relationships are in agreement, cultural and familial responsibilities and obligations are easily met. In our social relationships, our values of reciprocity, love, respect and tolerance are clear guidelines. Admittedly, there are times when relationships are strained and decisions are questioned, but ultimately, through dialogue, consensus is reached. They say in Tonga that the wealth of a person is his/her kainga extended (family); it is from them that support and loyalty are drawn. The importance of relationships to Pacific culture lies in the value of social capital over economic capital.

Earlier in this chapter I talked about Hau’ofa’s (1993) concept of a ‘sea of islands’ that also speaks to the common ocean that we share as people of Oceania. The ‘sea of islands’ concept also promotes the value of relationships for Pacific people. I have also proposed that we consider ‘relationships’ as one of the fundamental concepts of educational leadership in the Pacific. In raising the importance of relationships, I am also proposing that we consider building organisational relationships as a key tool in operationalising our strategic plans.

Transferring the fundamental conceptualisations of societal relationships into our organisations can help build sound organisational relationships into our education systems. Here I am proposing that we transfer the values that underpin
societal relationships—such as reciprocity, love, respect and tolerance—into our education organisations.

It is a common practice within Tongan organisations that staff members collect a certain amount of money from every pay cheque to contribute to a social fund. This fund is used when a member of staff has a funeral or a wedding, so that staff can contribute. In Tongan funerals it is common to see a whole organisation presenting gifts of tapa, mats and money to a fellow employee. On such occasions the organisation becomes another social unit as it assembles behind a long line of familial clans to pay tribute.

Through this one example, we can see how members of an organisation observe the values of reciprocity, love and respect in a cultural and social context. This also speaks to the fluidity of movement between the structures of our organisations and our social units, a movement that we as educational administrators are not always aware of and unfortunately, others discourage altogether. By recognising this movement we not only build relationships within the organisation but also build bridges between organisational context and societal context, thereby minimising the gap between these two structures. When we consciously move towards building authentic bridges between organisations and wider social units we do not have to spend so much time talking about ‘consultation’. Rather, through the process of weaving relationships between organisation and community, we complete a mat upon which we will later sit down to hold dialogue. By using guidelines from our social relationships to inform us in building our organisational relationships we will be engaged in blending the local and the global and consequently making our schools into Pacific schools.

Further to this, by closely aligning our organisational relationships along the guiding principles of our social relationships we are also exhibiting ‘pride in cultural identity’. We cannot seriously expect our children to take pride in our cultural identity by singing national anthems and raising flags! We have to lead by example and we can begin that by honouring our culture in our organisations.

The communications strategy proposed above hinges on well-articulated organisational relationships. When relationships within any organisation or any social unit are in agreement, information is shared more easily and quickly. Similarly, when relationships are in harmony, the consultation processes, decision-making processes and problem-solving processes are more efficient and effective.
Relationship building within organisations is crucial to the vision building, organisational analysis, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases of any plan. Building organisational relationships that reflect our cultural values is an investment that cannot be ignored or forgone.

Learning organisations

Central to this book is the search for Pacific approaches to educational planning. In implementing this approach we maintain Pacific cultures while we select best practices from a global perspective. At the centre of this approach is a greater realisation of our Pacific cultures in our organisations.

Epeli Tokai in chapter 4 presents a framework for planning based on a cyclical process of continual planning, implementation and evaluation. This strongly suggests a need for a learning organisation constantly to upgrade, develop, reevaluate and adapt to the changing nature of its environment. Similarly, Uke Kombra suggests further research in order to understand other variables in educational planning better. Through his own research, Uke Kombra has been able to define specific variables essential to educational planning at provincial level for Papua New Guinea. Tokai and Kombra both have presented chapters that demand our educational organisations to be constantly improving and seeking out new ways of doing things.

I commented earlier on the characteristics of visionary leadership, stressing that it involves encouraging learning organisations. Similarly, I have also proposed that we develop our understanding of educational leadership in the Pacific. Along similar lines, I also put forward the proposal that we develop our understanding of educational organisations in the Pacific. To do this we need to think of our organisations as learning organisations, thus encouraging growth, development and most importantly, research. Thus, in operationalising the plan, there is need for careful documentation by using a communications strategy to document processes and evaluate our own progress. A learning organisation would also promote professional development at all levels, as well as a strong commitment to capacity building. Consequently, the educational planner in operationalising the strategic plan needs to think of cultivating organisational cultures and the provision of an appropriate organisational climate that will encourage organisational learning. When an organisation promotes the building of relationships and develops well-
defined communications strategies that are founded on visionary leadership, it thereby encourages learning cultures within organisations.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

In recent years debate over educational policies has moved from input- to outcomes-based policies. The growing focus on outcomes policy comes from an increasing concern with gaps and mismatches between investment in education and producing skilled people for the labour market (Mingat, Tan & Sosale, 2003). For us here in the Pacific, our limited resource base, as well as the growing demands from donors to display evidence of investment, has forced educational planners to plot in some form of indicators for the evaluation and monitoring of their plans.

However, the question that we are now left with is how do we monitor and evaluate our plans? Uke Kombra’s chapter outlines problems with monitoring and evaluation and has suggested ways of addressing these problems. Kombra has addressed these problems thoroughly. I would, however, like to raise a few additional points in order to illustrate linkages with the discussion earlier in this chapter.

I suggest that with a well-defined communications strategy and a predisposition towards developing a learning organisation, the task of monitoring could be carried out more effectively and efficiently. With a clearly articulated communications strategy, information—both informal and formal—can be channelled back into the monitoring mechanism more fluidly and regularly. Monitoring then becomes part and parcel of the general administration of the plan, as it provides regular feedback. It is anticipated that when monitoring becomes part of the administration, it becomes less burdensome for staff members. Similarly, with the task of evaluation, when the communications strategy is well articulated and regulated, it can provide timely and well-defined information for evaluative purposes. It is also important to evaluate against organisational vision and to maintain observation of the changing nature of the educational terrain. Further, it is also important that the evaluation process is sensitive to outside changes and thereby informs the organisation in a timely manner.
The success of gathering authentic, reliable and timely data for monitoring and evaluation tasks again hinges on well-defined communications strategies and organisational relationships. These two variables rest on the shoulders of an informed educational leader, who has articulated these concepts in the strategic plan.

Where do we go from here?

Unlike my seafaring ancestors who conquered Oceania by reading the stars and ocean currents, I am not sure where to go from here. But I am convinced that with further research we will once again be able to read the stars and feel the currents thereby once more designing our own course of action.

We need to further our understanding of Pacific educational leadership, perhaps not just from a cognitive perspective but also from cultural and historical perspectives. We certainly need to equip our educational leaders better for today’s demanding educational terrain. And we cannot do this by mere wishful thinking, or by asking donors to supply another workshop.

We also need to know more about the ‘colours of our organisations’. In order to make our schools reflective of Pacific values we need to understand our educational organisations—perhaps the last of the colonial legacies. How can we make our educational organisations Pacific organisations? How can we bridge the gap between societal cultures and organisational cultures? I have suggested a closer alignment of societal relationships with organisational relationships. But much needs to be done before existing tensions between organisations and communities can be eased. How can we construct learning organisations that will be responsive to the changing nature of our times? And how can we maintain cultural development in light of the push for economic development?

Undoubtedly, more questions need to be asked and much work remains to be done. What this book has provided is a collection of thoughts on Pacific educational planning that will help us to keep pushing forward our ideas about educational planning in our region. This book is certainly a useful start to a discussion that will continue to grow as we learn more about leadership, administration, organisations and planning, and about ourselves as people from a ‘sea of islands’.
References


