EDUCATION FOR ALL REPORT 2013

COOK ISLANDS

Section 1: A summary on the status, achievements and challenges of each EFA goal in Cook Islands education. (In an effort to achieve EFA goals by the year 2015).

GOAL 1: Expand early childhood care and education.

STATUS:

- Currently participation in ECE in the Cook Islands is progressing well. There is continued support for upgrading teaching qualifications in this area.

- Continued effort in improving ECE teachers’ understanding of teaching techniques and approaches to Early Childhood Education.

- The recent enactment of the Education Act 2012 has seen the entry level for funded ECE lowered to 3 years old.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Cook Islands Ministry of Education ECE advisor has been appointed the Asia Region Network of Early Childhood (ARNEC) representative for the Pacific region. She is a member of a global network of early childhood educators in the Pacific and all members are kept informed of relevant trends, studies and research.

- A continued high enrolment rate on Rarotonga has been maintained throughout the years which indicate the high value placed locally on Early Childhood education.

- ECE teachers are increasingly taking advantage of the opportunities given to them for training and upgrading skills, knowledge and qualifications.

- Approximately 80% of ECE teachers in the Cook Islands have an accredited ECE teaching qualification and all others are enrolled in training.
• The continuation of the Te Kakaia programme supports parents as first teachers through the implementation of a course called Toolbox. Toolbox facilitates parents in learning - how to understand how their children learn - and equips them with skills to take advantage of significant learning moments. The course also teaches parents the best way to support their children’s learning before and while they are at school. At the moment there are three trained facilitators of the “Toolbox” course currently working on Rarotonga. Since 2011, small pockets of up to 10 to 15 parents have participated in meetings, lessons, conferences and this work is continuing to progress well. The course concentrates on the early years (0 to 6) and the middle years (6 to 12). Toolbox will be taken into schools in July 2013. The intention is to build on the number of participants, including grandparents, who are often the primary caregivers for Cook Islands children whose parents are employed in full time work.

• ECE in the Cook Islands continues to be a national priority as indicated in the Ministry of Education Statement of Intent (2010 – 2015)

Table 1: NER in ECE between years 2005 to 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrolment of official ECE age group</th>
<th>Population of the official ECE age group</th>
<th>NER in ECE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>449</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>485</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>474</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: GER in ECE between years 2005 to 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrolment of ECE</th>
<th>Population of the official ECE age group</th>
<th>GER in ECE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>456</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOCUS:

- Focus in 2013 will be a media campaign aimed at parents emphasizing the importance of Early Childhood Education in the Cook Islands and continue to encourage and support the upgrade of teacher qualifications in Early Childhood Education.

- Intended policy reviews include ECE resourcing and fit for purpose building requirements.

CHALLENGES:

- Many ECE centres are attached to schools and not all school principals understand the importance of ECE in improving education.

- Access to quality ECE level education on isolated islands in the Cook Islands.

- Still no set standards for private child care services.

- Low GER rate on outer islands, particularly in the Northern group islands of the Cook Islands.

- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching practice and the provision of guidance and support is difficult to provide for ECE teachers on outer islands.
GOAL 2: Provide free and compulsory primary education for all.

STATUS:

According to the Cook Islands census November 2011, we have 98 – 99% of 13-14 year old students attending school. Enrolment rates begin to decline after this age as some students decide to leave school at the age of 15, moving either into the workforce or leaving school for personal reasons. The percentage of school aged children currently enrolled already meets the national goals set down in the Education Master Plan 2008-2023.

The following statistics are based on enrolments for the years 2007 to 2012. Included is the national enrolment by educational level, and primary and secondary enrolment by region.
The expansion of ICT in schools to help support the facilitation of quality educational programmes has progressed well. ICT has been a pivotal pathway for making education more accessible for students. The Inclusive education and gender equality policies are considered in all programmes implemented by the Ministry of Education.

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- An online programme (Te Kura Uira) allows teachers/tutors on one island to teach a group of students on another island through the use of Skype and other related technology such as Idroo – a computerised interactive whiteboard. Further development will see the programme used to enhance professional development opportunities for teachers working in the outer islands.

**FOCUS:**

- 2013 is a building year. The aim is to prepare year 9 and 10 classes across multiple curriculum areas and make sure the programmes are researched, resourced and conducive to E-learning and Cook Islands internet speeds. In 2014 we aim to have two teachers deliver the Year 9 and 10 curriculum to our isolated islands via new technologies.

**CHALLENGES:**

- Reliable internet connectivity – supporting teachers to cope with a changing environment and the need to switch teaching strategies to reflect the current technology constraints.

- Student self management. We need to provide extra support for learners through the provision of a pastoral care person at the home school of each student to assist students with their learning and understanding.

- Cost and ability to find suitable tutors who have the time and are willing to conduct part time online learning.
GOAL 3: Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults.

There has been an emphasis on vocational training for young people and adults in education over the past few years. This goal aligns with long term plans such as the National Sustainable Development Plan and the Education Master Plan. These courses have had positive outcomes for all participating learners. The Cook Islands has two trade schools under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education - The Cook Islands Trades Training Centre and The Hospitality and Tourism Training Centre. Both schools offer courses in vocational education with New Zealand accredited qualifications at various levels. Secondary schools from all over the Cook Islands can also access courses at the Trades Schools whilst still studying at secondary school under the Dual Pathway Programme. The “Learning for Life” theme is valued and acknowledged in all programmes that the Ministry of Education implement.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Continued success rates of student participation and learning outcomes in various vocational training courses.
- More and more adult men and women in our communities are becoming qualified in a range of trades.
- A course prospectus was released at the end of 2012 and offers interested persons in the community the opportunity to participate in a selection of courses open to all age groups. Examples of these courses include: film production, telecommunications, housekeeping, and renewable energy and assist in the promotion of the “Learning for Life” message.
- The Ministry of Education was involved in the implementation and organization of a Youth Campaign that took place in the Cook Islands in 2012 to address the alarming rate of youth suicide in the country. As part of this initiative, Youth line was established in conjunction with the New Zealand Government to provide access to support services for those at risk. Youth line is accessible to all and provides counseling advice by phone. Calls are private and confidential and free of charge. To date, the statistics indicate that Youth line has proven to be very successful.

FOCUS:

- Vocational training programmes continue to be reviewed and strengthened to ensure that they are implemented in such a way as to best suit the needs of all Cook Islands students.
• Managing student profiles through the use of IEPs (Individual Education Plans) to ensure that all students have a clear and achievable career pathway.

• Policy – A review of the School leavers and Dual Pathways programme.

CHALLENGE:

• To develop and implement a tertiary education strategy that will increase the level of participation of young people in further skill development and training for employment.

GOAL 4: Increase adult literacy by 50%

Increasingly, adult literacy is recognized as a challenge for the Cook Islands. Currently support is provided for learners involved in trades training with a more intensive programme currently under development to address the literacy need of inmates in the local prison. There is still considerable work to be done in this area. Sourcing a reliable instrument for determining adult literacy levels is proving challenging.


The Cook Islands has achieved gender parity in education participation and achievement. There are few limitations to what people living in the Cook Islands can do or access in regards to education. Opportunities are available for both genders to participate fully. However, there are still institutionalized areas like outdated legislation and other national policies that need to be amended before gender equality can be met fully in Cook Islands society.

• The consideration of gender differences in curriculum areas will be included in the review of our national curriculum, due to be completed before 30 June 2013.

• Inclusive education values are incorporated in all school planning.

• The focus this year will be to ensure that gender issues are monitored appropriately and that all schools are participating in finding gender friendly options for students.

• A challenge in relation to gender parity is changing the mind sets and values of people in the general community, especially when it comes to daily responses and/or discussions about what boys and girls do and the differences and/or similarities between them.
GOAL 6: Improve the quality of education.

- Status – All curriculum documents are due for review in 2013. These changes will include any changes in the new Education Act 2012, the Inclusive Education and Gender Equality policies.

- Education Act 2012 has been endorsed by parliament however the actual enforcement date is yet to be confirmed.

- Publication of Education Gazette (quarterly) and Newsletters (monthly) provide a range of relevant information.

- The continued strengthening of quality management systems including regular monitoring and review of teachers and schools.

- As part of the school review process, areas of national focus are identified to provide an overview of system level performance. The following focus areas are the current areas of national focus for 2013:
  1) Assessment methods and practice and how assessment data informs improved practice.
  2) The implementation and monitoring of schools annual plans.
  3) The management of student transitions from primary to secondary school and/or secondary school to post-school.

- A diverse and extensive range of educational courses are now more accessible to the wider community.

- The strengthening of student well being facilities with the appointment of three qualified counselors. Two counselors work on the main island of Rarotonga with the third based on Aitutaki – a large southern group island.

- The establishment of onsite counseling services such as Runanga Tauturu at Tereora College.

- Continued high involvement of teachers in ongoing qualification upgrade at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

- Teachers’ and principals’ job descriptions have been rewritten and job sized with subsequent salary increases effective from the new financial year (1 July 2013).
• Continued improved ICT connectivity and other related services for educational purposes are now available throughout the Cook Islands. This is especially important for our outer islands who continue to lag behind the main island of Rarotonga for IT connectivity and speed. The roll out by our local telecommunications provider of the O3B system should provide a more efficient service which will aid the provision of quality education for all.

• Achievements – significant improvement in overall NCEA qualification results as well as merit and excellent certificate and course endorsements.

• A tertiary strategy to address youth employment and other related issues is currently under development and is planned to be ready by mid 2013.

*Please note the significant improvement in NCEA level 1, 2 and 3 results for 2012 and the goals set for 2015. NCEA (National Certificate in Educational Achievement) is the New Zealand accredited qualification also used as our national qualification for students in the Cook Islands.*

**NCEA L1 - L3 Achievement Progress against the 2015 Target**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement Progress (%)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49</td>
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<td>63</td>
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<td>University Entrance</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFA GOAL</td>
<td>Description of programmes and/or initiatives taking place in the Cook Islands which aim to achieve the EFA goals by 2015. Information taken from SOI (Statement of Intent 2010 – 2015)</td>
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</table>
| Goal 1: ECE   | • Increased enrolment in ECE  
• Implementation of ECE specific Media campaign  
• ECE teacher upgrades (qualifications)  
• ECE resources policy  
• ECE fit for purpose/compliance |
| Goal 2: ACCESS| • Inclusive education policy  
• Maori language resource development 10 new titles for grades 4-8  
• Isolated student support programme  
• Disability Access baseline  
• Workplace internship implemented/policy to develop  
• Health promotion programme  
• Pa Enua (Outer Islands) foundation programme |
| Goal 3: QUALITY EDUC | • Curriculum review  
• Vocational training programmes reviewed and strengthened  
• Introduction of Adult literacy programmes  
• Pastoral care for vocational and adult learners  
• TVET communication strategy and scholarship programmes implemented  
• Continued Education focus  
• Life Skills policy  
• Fitness Of Purpose Focus: Tourism and Hospitality Schools  
• Disaster management plans  
• Technical support to ICT systems  
• Specific media campaign in support of school committee membership and participation  
• Review programmes |
| Goal 4: ADULT LIT | • Continuing Education Policy  
• Assessing adult literacy  
• Communities at risk campaign |
| Goal 5: GENDER EQUALITY | • Inclusive education Media Campaign  
• Consideration and inclusion of Gender Equality policy into curriculum document review |
| Goal 6: MEASURABLE OUTCOMES | • National Monitoring research focus  
• Performance Development System completed. Analysed and supported through professional development opportunities.  
• Northern Group Principals’ workshop  
• Supply and Development of Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN)  
• Financial management and review of MYOB Exo systems (software)  
• Programme evaluations  
• Teacher aide training programme  
• Training Needs analysis |
Conclusion:

In the Cook Islands participation and achievement across all areas of education continues to improve. This continued improvement is aided by the alignment of expectations to the key strategies of Education For All (EFA), the Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) and our own governing documents including the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) and the Education Master Plan (EMP).

References:

2) Robert Matheson, Ministry of Education, ITC Director.
3) Tracey Ellery, Ministry of Education, Literacy and Inclusive Education advisor.
5) 12th Asia Pacific EFA coordinators meeting minutes, 2011.
8) Results Diagram for the Cook Islands Education Master Plan, 2008 – 2023: (2, 5).