



PACIFIC SOCIETY

IN TRANSITION

Our Vision

Enabling civil societies from around the Pacific, to manage the change from traditional to modern societies.

Normally this would be considered the realm of 'development'. However, 'development' suggests a country that needs to be 'helped'. However, we believe that sometimes the countries that need to be 'developed' actually have retained elements in their society that is probably 'better' than the equivalent in traditionally rich countries.

Our Goals

Our overall goals can be placed into three categories:

1. Quality of Life

Our largest category, but with a current focus on youth development, crime prevention, rehabilitation, reproductive health, transportation, conservation and clean water access/usage.

2. Education

The development and implementation of innovative and contextually relevant education from primary, through tertiary, postgraduate and the non-formal educational sector.

3. Methodology

The ways to implement strategies at a community level for Pacific societies that engineer sustainability and ownership.

Current & Recent Activities

Referee for Peace

Inmates and youth at risk in the community are taught the skills and discipline to referee rugby games. The programme was implemented in conjunction with an IRB trainer.

Raiwai Youth Development

Youth at risk in a socio-economically depressed area were engaged in a skills training programme (carpentry and brick laying) whilst working on the youth hall in their own area.

Rehabilitation Programme Evaluations

A systematic review of rehabilitation programmes within and outside of the Fiji Prisons & Corrections Programme. This was initially part of an AusAID programme but the work was continued after the programme formally withdrew from the government and community initiatives.

Rural Hand Hygiene

School children are assessed for their hand washing behaviour in rural schools in Taveuni (Fiji's third largest island). The evaluation is to form the basis of an education programme to promote good hand hygiene. This was prompted by a recent outbreak of typhoid cases.

Peer Educator evaluation (HIV/AIDS)

A consultative development programme was initiated that provides a valid way of offering appraisals of the efficacy of peer educator programmes based around reproductive health issues, particular with regard to HIV/AIDS.

Licensing of Behaviour Intervention Programmes

We have developed an approach to suggest that a licensing programme that helps to authenticate both the technical correctness **AND** the community acceptance of such an intervention programme, will make the overall efficacy of such interventions result in significant ownership and sustainability of the intervention.

POSITIVE & NEGATIVES IN TRANSITION



Comprehensive Marketing Campaign for Engagement

We have developed a multi channel marketing / advertising campaign to initiate dialogue with the key elements in target communities to engage in a meaningfully relevant way with regard to a future implementation of an intervention programme.

Workshop Implementation Approach

A strategy for implementing intervention workshops has been devised that creates immediate engagement in the target community because of their initial input in the construction and timelines of a workshop agenda. Workshop facilitators can be

trained to select relevant material based on the actual perceived relevancy of materials *'in situ'* by the workshop participants. This is especially important with sensitive and sometimes *tabu* (taboo) topics such as reproductive health in Pacific cultures.

Primary & Early Secondary Education

We have created a pioneering primary and early secondary school just on the outskirts of Suva's CBD. The curriculum has been developed to be relevant for the citizens of the Pacific in the 21st century with an emphasis on creative, innovative lateral thinking skills.

Rural Community 'Buy in' to Conservation Programmes

We are currently developing a methodology to enable the community in

rural areas to understand the relevancy to themselves in the conservation of key indicators species endemic to their environment. This is being done concurrently with an existing conservation programme on the island of Gau (in the Lomaiviti Group of islands of Fiji).

Projects for the Imminent Future

Urban & Peri-urban Youth Programmes

With a demographic of more than 50% of most Pacific communities having people under the age of 25, and current unemployment being relatively high, we feel that the traditional development of youth needs to be significantly updated and revised to include programmes which are immediately relevant to the youth, particularly those at risk in socio-economically depressed areas. Our experience has demonstrated that programmes are not accepted or implemented in a sustainable way unless the whole community is considered and brought into the programme.

Implementation of Developed Programmes

We have had initial seed funding to develop programmes (such as the Peer Education and Community Engagement Marketing Campaign) but we need to

actually deploy the programmes in the community. Our current focus is on reproductive health but the approach can be configured to any number of different issues.

Continuation of Started Programmes

Most especially the 'Referee for Peace' programme has had 'bootstrap' funding but requires significant funding to continue the 2 years already going and to refine the approach to be able to implemented in other Pacific countries.

Development of Electronic Access to Previous Intervention Programme Reports

A key component in any behaviour change intervention approach is access to previous material and literature. The academic literature on Pacific communities is sparse and highly selective. However, there has been hundreds if not thousands of highly technical reports written and submitted for the development aid sectors of the relevant Pacific programmes. Future programmes can learn much from the 'failures' as they can from the 'successes' of such programmes. We believe that there is an enormous benefit to making such reports available through a relevantly tagged and indexed database. This will contribute towards future consultants not 'reinventing-the-wheel'.

Education of Critical Thinking Skills through Simulations

Implementation of an education programme for adults who learn to think of effective and valid solutions to contexts of a 'simulated crisis'. This is not the same as 'disaster management' because one is already anticipating a 'disaster'. This is instead coping with an unanticipated 'crisis'. The simulations are not unlike those of the 'UN-Model' simulations that are adopted by upper secondary schools and universities. Our model is considerably more detailed and engaging than the 'UN-Model' programme which normally deals with simulations of constructing international agreements.

The Need PSiT

The people of the world have been going through an unprecedented change in societal structure and ways of living within that society. Some regions such as the Pacific region have been going through an increasingly faster rate of change from a 'traditional' communal and provincial trade exchange society with highly stratified societal roles, to a modern, financial, broadly democratic and increasingly globalised ones. The change from traditional to modern society is usually the result of tension. Just as in the physical world, 'tension' needs to be applied in an optimal manner to make the change as smooth as possible. Too little results in nothing happening, too much and the fabric of the society will 'break'. Sadly, it is often the case that the tensions results in severe breaks, or fractures. Issues such as: substance abuse, human rights violations, depression, suicide, genocide, poor governance, political and economic corruption, urbanisation and their ghettos, unemployment, increase in sexually transmitted infections; are but some of the common indices that the tension to change in a society has been too severe.

The Pacific Society in Transition is an organisation dedicated to helping to understand how Pacific islanders are currently coping with the transition, and how they can best be aided to make future transitions of maximum benefit whilst minimising the negative aspects of tension that normally follow.

Many non-governmental organisations in developing regions tend to stress or focus on the negative connotations of transition. The tensions that bring about these changes in society can be both good or they can be bad. As a developing region, the documentation of these changes tends to focus on the negatives. However as important as such a focus is in understanding what 'not' to do, there needs to be a balance where the transitions are conducted in a positive way so that we can better learn what can (potentially) be done. The Pacific Society in Transition has a more balanced outlook at not just 'solving developmental problems' but also learning from individuals and communities who appear to be 'getting it right'.



Contact Details

Web:

<http://www.societyintransition.org>

Resource persons:

Robin: (robin@oceanikpsi.org)

Sevu: (sevu@societyintransition.org)

Bruce: (bruce@zoomfiji.org)

Aseri: (aseri_rika@yahoo.com)