

## **Review of the Pacific Graduate Diploma Programme in Not-for-Profit Management**

PIANGO in partnership with NZAID, undertook an independent review of the Graduate Diploma in NGO management programme (GDP) and Pacific Indigenous Management Initiative (PIMI) early this year. The Review was undertaken by Dr John Cretney (NZ) and Ms Susana Tuisawau (Fiji). The Final Report of the Review was discussed at the recent Multi-Stakeholders Workshop (MSW) in Nadi.

Attached is the executive summary of the Review Report with the recommendations

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Section 1: Introduction**

- This section of the report sets out the background to the development of the Diploma programme, an overview of the philosophy and mode of delivery of the programme, and the purpose of the review.
- A brief outline of the consultations made is outlined. Full details of each country visit made are provided in the Appendices to the report.

#### **Section 2: Context within which the Graduate Diploma operates**

- The NGO sector in the Pacific is very diverse but characterized by an increasing demand for better governance and management, by an increasing interest in regional and global issues, and by the emergence of regionally based NGOs with a coordinating role in their sphere of influence.
- The Graduate Diploma was designed to initially to meet the need for improved management and leadership skills in the Pacific NGO sector and has had a focus on the needs of national NGOs.
- While the Diploma remains unique in catering for Pacific NGO sector management and leadership training, related capacity building initiatives exist across the Pacific through non accredited programmes mostly at a lower level, and a range of certificated programmes such as the community and youth work programmes offered by USP.
- At a more advanced level, a postgraduate and masters programme in Development Studies is offered through USP, and Waikato University offers a postgraduate Diploma in Not for Profit Management.
- The issue of whether the Diploma and other capacity building programmes under PIANGO should be meeting the capacity building needs of all NGOs in the Pacific appears unclear.
- Since the time the Diploma was introduced, regional NGOs have emerged which are not part of the current PIANGO membership. However staff from regional NGOs

have participated in the Diploma programme and their needs and those of national NGOs overlap as all NGOs have become involved in advocacy and dialogue.

### **Section 3: Impact of the Graduate Diploma programme**

- The Diploma arose as a major strategic development from the PIMI (Pasifika Indigenous Management Initiative) and is consistent with subsequent related developments – the PIANGO Strategic Plan for the 2001-2005 period and the Clearinghouse Framework for Pacific Regional NGOs on Capacity Building agreed in 2002. However because of internal issues with PIANGO management, little progress has been made on two educational initiatives raised through the agreement – the adaptation of higher level training to meet the emerging needs of NGOs and the development of lower level qualifications for the NGO sector.
- The Diploma has progressed the PIMI objectives of providing culturally appropriate training, fostering the growth of learning communities and establishing the Diploma as a vehicle for capacity building. Less progress has been made on developing NGO leaders as trainers or moving towards greater localisation of the programme through Pacific involvement.
- Broadly the programme was felt to be consistent with the PIANGO philosophy on capacity building and that the evolution of the programme itself should demonstrate this principle. Steps such as accelerating Pacific trainer involvement and re establishing an Advisory Committee would progress this.
- Over 330 students are now enrolled on the Diploma programme and significant progress has been made despite some organizational difficulties experienced by both PIANGO and some NLUs.
- Positive feedback has been received about the impact of the programme on individuals, NLUs/NGOs, and the operations of PIANGO. Individuals have felt better motivated and equipped to do their job and PIANGO and NLUs/NGOs have seen their organisations strengthened. It is too early to conclude that national impact has been significant.
- The major factors identified which have held back progress have been:
  - The lack of regular courses to allow students to progress their study
  - Funding constraints – timing and quantum
  - Lack of capacity of PIANGO as a coordinating organisation
  - The lack of capacity of NLUs to organise at a country level
  - Lack of coordination between key agencies
  - Lack of prior learning or cross credit opportunities
- Recommendations made to address these issues include changes to the funding process, the appointment of a staff member in PIANGO with specific responsibility for Diploma administration, provision of operating guidelines for NLUs, and the formation of a Regional Advisory Committee to oversee the programme and have input into programme development.

## Section 4: Programme Management and Delivery

- Scope exists to improve the processes for the selection of in country students. While many students fulfil the description of occupying NGO management and leadership roles, a significant proportion do not. NLUs need to promote the programme more actively and apply clear and transparent processes to get a balance of suitably qualified applicants into the programme.
- The processes for providing assistance to out of country students by PIANGO need to be made more transparent through a review of funding support arrangements and of criteria for the selection of students. Seeking scholarship funds through donor agencies should also be undertaken.
- Course student numbers have generally been in the 15-25 range targeted by Unitec NZ. Teaching staff value the diversity and opportunities arising from a larger group, and courses are more financially attractive to Unitec NZ at higher numbers.
- The slow rate of progress through the programme has been a major factor for students arising from a lack of course opportunities, or through students able to access study but unable to complete course obligations. The need for more regular courses and quicker turnaround of assignments were two most frequently mentioned factors, and suggestions have been made for greater student support.
- Courses have been delivered on a regular basis in PNG, Fiji, and Samoa with courses also offered in Vanuatu until disrupted as a result of internal PIANGO problems. One off courses have also been held in FSM and Guam. Given the lack of overall promotion and other problems, the Review Team concludes that significant unmet demand exists and that delivery should continue in the current four countries (PNG, Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu) with starter courses subject to demand in other countries such as Tonga, Solomon Is, Guam and FSM.
- The modular structure of the programme found favour with students, although a proportion found the courses too intensive for their learning styles. Many would prefer courses packaged over a two week period.
- In particular, the Cultures and Values course was considered too short at 3 days.
- There was general support for a Graduate Certificate as a possible early exit option.
- No suggestions were received on material to remove from the programme but a number of suggestions were received for areas which could be included or strengthened in the programme to better meet Pacific needs and especially for NGOs with an issues focus. (eg advocacy, writing of policy papers, project management etc). It is suggested that a new Advisory Committee review programme content for the Pacific.
- Comments on teaching methodology were very positive and consistent with Sequal surveys carried out by Unitec NZ.

- Progress on involving Pacific indigenous trainers was considered important by both students and NGOs and more progress desired. Most progress has been made in Papua New Guinea where a team of co trainers has been established. This progress has been facilitated by the setting up of a national NGO training provider organisation which has been able to focus on negotiating training funds and organising the programme in conjunction with Unitec NZ.
- Strategies to develop databases of suitable trainers at country level are needed and progress needs to be made on transition to a more prominent role in delivery by Pacific trainers. An annual workshop for Pacific trainers to facilitate networking, developing a common approach, assisting with programme input, and professional development is suggested.
- While adequate, there are a number of areas where coordination and administration can be improved mostly at the PIANGO and NLU level.
- The lack of staff members in both PIANGO and NLUs with clearly defined responsibilities for Diploma administration has created liaison difficulties for Unitec NZ, and clear assignment of roles in both PIANGO and NLUs is recommended.
- The unclear status in some countries about which organization has responsibility for Diploma administration has also caused problems.
- The current planning cycle needs to be brought forward by three months to ensure that funding negotiations and contract signing are completed before the calendar year starts.
- Moving to a three year funding cycle with NZAID based around the projected level of demand would remove another area of uncertainty.
- Authoritative student records are best kept by the programme provider (Unitec) with PIANGO acting as a clearing house for information supplied to NLUs with confidentiality of such information needing to be respected.
- Reporting on course outcomes by NLUs was variable and a more consistent basis for reporting to both PIANGO and Unitec is proposed.
- Financial management of the programme by Unitec NZ and PIANGO was well managed and clear information made available.
- The newly negotiated Unitec NZ - PIANGO agreement very clearly spells out the duties of Unitec NZ, PIANGO and NLUs and if adhered to will greatly improve coordination. Some amendments should be made to clarify responsibility for marketing and data management
- Marketing and promotion of the programme was felt by both students and NGOs to need a significant boost. The appointment of a Communications Officer by PIANGO to work with the PIANGO Diploma administrator would provide the opportunity to

upgrade promotion through the website, brochures and newsletters and media coverage.

- The Review Team viewed Unitec NZ internal audit documentation related to the overall Graduate Diploma programme which indicated that the programme met the standards set by Unitec NZ. There was consistency between the general observations and recommended improvements noted in the process with the findings of the Review Team.

## **Section 5: Sustainability**

- Resourcing of the programme has been a constraint with a static number of courses (7-8) offered over the period 2002-2004 and some countries only hosting one course annually. Courses have increased to 10 in 2005 and up to 16 courses might be needed in 2006 to satisfy demand and allow students to progress.
- A review of the cost of the programme has been completed based on detailed costings provided by Unitec NZ for three typical courses. For commercial reasons, this cost data and data related to Unitec NZ and other institutions is confidential to the Review Steering Committee.
- The only comparable modular programme at this level located in order to undertake a comparison of costs is the Graduate Diploma in Public Sector Management offered by Massey in Tonga for the government sector and also funded by NZAID. Also under the auspices of NZAID is the In Country Programme in Samoa and Tonga. However this programme is not qualification based and generally does not involve student assessment.
- The current funding model has serious flaws. The donor grant is fixed and takes no account of actual student numbers so that no incentive exists to maximise participation and no account taken costs which vary with enrolment levels. Suggestions are made regarding the features of a funding model aimed at better incentives for all parties and an actual model proposed. The establishment of a separate scholarship fund for out of country students is also suggested.
- The Review Team considers that long term demand for the programme will exist to warrant this strategy especially given the population growth predicted in Melanesia and the pressing development needs in a number of Pacific countries.
- The Review Team has considered both shorter term arrangements and options for longer term sustainability.
- Working towards increasing institutionalization or localization of the programme was an objective of the original PIMI agreement and featured in PIANGO's strategic plan. However progress toward this objective has been limited.
- Localisation relates primarily to how the course is delivered and institutionalization to how the programme is managed and accredited.

- Feedback from students and NGOs on this issue was mixed. While almost all favoured greater localization through greater use of Pacific trainers, views were more divided over transfer of control to a Pacific institution. In favour was access to the facilities which could be available (library and computers) and the greater sense of local ownership. Against was a concern about capacity or affinity with/understanding of the NGO sector.
- The capacity of Pacific institutions to be involved was broadly assessed and most major institutions would be able to offer facilities, access to a pool of teaching staff, access to quality assurance procedures, but none had specific experience teaching at Graduate Diploma level for the Not-for-Profit Sector.
- In the shorter term, it is imperative that current students can complete their studies and provide the pool of graduates needed for the next stage of capacity building. To avoid disruption and uncertainty, it is suggested that funding under the present programme be continued for three to five years, with steps taken to increase localization and reduce costs.
- Seeking support from a wider range of donors along with implementation of a three year funding cycle for NZAID support should be part of this strategy.
- In the longer term, the Review Team suggests four options for consideration by the end of 2007 which effect continued localisation and /or institutionalisation of the programme in the Pacific and which would reduce costs.
- These options cover continued accreditation under Unitec NZ but with mostly or all Pacific indigenous trainer delivery, a Unitec NZ partnership with either a Pacific tertiary institution or capacity building organization, or provision of a replacement programme through a Pacific institution (which could include programme purchase from Unitec NZ).
- The report indicates the level of risk of these options to stakeholders especially students.

## **Section 6: Follow up**

- To ensure that agreed recommendations from the report are followed up, the Review Team recommends that the Steering Committee take responsibility for a review after one year of progress made with report implementation and report to the PIANGO Board

## All Recommendations

- R 3.1** That PIANGO undertake a more detailed needs analysis to clarify the need for a Pacific wide lower level NGO qualification offered locally as a stepping stone to the Graduate Diploma
- R 3.2** That PIANGO effect action on the Pacific Regional Clearinghouse Framework on Capacity Building Initiatives and in particular to identify and disseminate information about the range of training opportunities locally in the Pacific appropriate for NGOs, and that PIANGO be funded to establish and maintain a database of Pacific NGOs to facilitate communications and information exchange.
- R 3.3** That NZAID reviews the current funding arrangements related to the Diploma programme and in particular give consideration to a three year funding programme for the Diploma reviewable annually based on demand projected (14-16 courses per year)
- R 3.4** That the current planning and funding cycle be brought forward by three months to ensure that funding and contract negotiations are completed prior to the teaching year
- R 3.5** That PIANGO give urgency to the appointment of a Programme/Administration Officer with responsibility for PIANGOs role in the Diploma programme namely,
- Programme promotion and media coverage through Pacific wide avenues
  - Coordinating a network of NLU Diploma administrators
  - Acting as Executive Officer to a Regional Advisory Committee
  - Liaison with Unitec NZ
  - Application of consistent policies for funding of out of country students
  - Maintaining student records
  - Acting as a clearing house for Diploma information
  - Developing a Pacific wide database of regional trainers
  - Assisting with the investigation of cross credit opportunities for students
  - Investigating the demand for other Pacific wide NGO training
- R 3.6** That PIANGO confirm NLU responsibilities in Fiji and Tonga in relation to Diploma delivery and that PIANGO
- R 3.7** That where not already clear that NLUs formally assign the role of Diploma Administrator to be responsible for local administration of the Diploma programme including course organization, course promotion, compilation of course reports, and maintenance of a student and Pacific trainer database.
- R 3.8** That Unitec NZ and PIANGO jointly develop guidelines for NLUs in relation to their administration of Diploma courses and the selection of appropriate students for the programme
- R 3.9** That the Unitec NZ - PIANGO MOU be amended to clarify roles in relation to programme marketing and the maintaining of accurate student records
- R 3.10** That a Pacific Regional Advisory Committee for the Diploma programme with agreed Terms of Reference be established with a suggested composition of the PIANGO Programme/Admin Officer as Executive Officer (when appointed), an experienced NGO leader/trainer within each NLU responsible for the delivery aspect of in-country courses, and the Unitec NZ Course Coordinator. Group to meet annually if possible and conduct other business through email contact. The key business should be to advise Unitec NZ and PIANGO on the Diploma programme (eg programme content), assess annual student demand, plan an annual course schedule, monitor local course admin, advise PIANGO in its funding negotiations with donors, and to further regional and national strategies for development of local trainer capacity

- R 4.1** That PIANGO in conjunction with Unitec NZ and NLUs develop improved student selection criteria for in country courses which take account of maximizing the number of organisations participating, and the role of applicants within their organisation.
- R 4.2** That PIANGO further develop guidelines for the transparent selection of out of country students supported by PIANGO funding with regard to both the level of funding available, and also the process and criteria by which students are selected. Priority should be given to students in leadership roles well progressed in their study and who are not able to access in country courses.
- R 4.3** That PIANGO establish a scholarship fund to support travel for out of country students and approach NZAID to help coordinate an approach to other donor agencies such as CCFD and the Commonwealth Foundation to actively seek additional funds to supplement the limited funding available through the NZAID funded programme.
- R 4.4** That Unitec NZ reviews the guidelines for processing of assignments with a view to improving assignment turnaround.
- R 4.5** That greater post course contact with students be encouraged through more active development of Pacific trainer capacity in each country, through active student follow up by the NLU Diploma administrator, by a greater level of post course contact by Unitec NZ staff, and that contact between students be encouraged through PIANGO networks (student support networks).
- R4.6** That delivery of the Diploma continue through established centres in PNG, Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu subject to satisfactory numbers of students meeting the agreed criteria, that active promotion of the programme be undertaken in Tonga, Solomon Islands, Guam and FSM to confirm whether demand exists to offer a series of initial courses, and that the delivery of electives be explored on a rotational or sub regional basis.
- R 4.7** That consideration be given to packaging delivery at Pacific venues (eg as two week programmes) scheduled at times which fit with both staff student availability and that interest in summer school options be investigated.
- R 4.8** That Unitec NZ pursue its proposal to provide a Graduate Certificate as an early exit point in the current Diploma programme.
- R 4.9** That the duration and credit rating of the Cultures and Values course be reviewed for Pacific participants and upgraded to at least a 12 credit five day programme.
- R 4.10** That with students nearing the stage of undertaking electives in the Pacific, that Unitec NZ with assistance from a Pacific Regional Advisory Committee, review the framework of electives and propose acceptable cross credit courses appropriate for Pacific students which are available from Pacific, Australian and New Zealand institutions, taking into account student feedback and plan for any Pacific electives to be customised for Pacific delivery.
- R 4.11** That Unitec NZ encourage students with extensive NGO sector experience to submit portfolios for Special Projects.
- R 4.12** That NLUs take pro active steps to develop a local database of Pacific trainers who meet criteria set by Unitec NZ and who are encouraged to complete appropriate training eg Training of Trainers.
- R 4.13** That Unitec NZ work with PIANGO and NLUs with the aim of moving as quickly as possible (ie 2- 3 years) towards a delivery model based on lead Pacific based trainers either supported by a Unitec NZ trainer or by moderation arrangements with Unitec NZ as the accrediting agency.
- R 4.14** That consideration be given to a Pacific based workshop for GDP Pacific trainers held on an annual basis.

- R 4.15** The accurate student records are held by Unitec NZ, PIANGO and NLUs based on dissemination of Unitec NZ central records through PIANGO to constituent NLUs.
- R 4.16** That PIANGO develop and provide key systems and templates needed by NLUs to ensure that Diploma administration is managed on a consistent basis. Systems to cover student records, course promotion, financial records, and course reporting.
- R 4.17** That PIANGO in consultation with Unitec NZ and NLUs develop a comprehensive marketing strategy incorporating aspects such as the development of
- a PIANGO PIMI brochure for mailout to constituent organizations
  - the PIANGO website to better profile the Diploma and provide contact for information
  - media and promotional material
  - promotional strategies for NLUs
- R 4.18** That PIANGO appoint a staff member in a communications and information role to develop and implement this strategy as part of their role.
- R 5.1** That a better funding model for the Graduate Diploma programme be investigated which is based on appropriate incentives for all parties to maximise enrolment of eligible students and offer the programme at optimum mix of Unitec and local delivery to meet quality requirements localisation objectives, and least cost.
- R 5.2**
- That NZAID continue to fund the Graduate Diploma for a period of three to five years to secure study pathways for existing students and allow orderly transition to more localized options to evolve.
- R 5.3**
- That Option 1 (transition to Pacific trainers) be implemented forthwith to maintain obligations to current students and that the range of future options for programme delivery be reviewed by the end of 2006 with a view to implementation from 2008.
- R 6.1** That after one year, the Steering Committee review progress made on agreed recommendations from this report and report progress to the PIANGO Board.