



PIANGO

Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
Association des ONGs des Iles du Pacifique

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Media release

27/09/07

(16/07)

Pacific Designed Study Provides Cooperative Approach to NGO Learning

The collaboration between the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO), the UNITEC Institute of Technology in New Zealand and the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) has allowed for the formulation of a Pacific designed study for Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) called the Graduate Diploma in Not for Profit Management Programme (GDP).

Through this study, Pacific islanders are able to enhance their knowledge of the supportive and cooperative approach to adult learning.

According to Solomone Duru, the first graduate in the GDP course in the region and the General Secretary of the Bible Society of the South Pacific based in Fiji, the programme came at a time he desperately needed to take the organisation to a different level.

“The courses provided the doorway which helped transform our organisation in a holistic way with a much clearer sense of our mission, values and direction. We are now on the edge of self-sufficiency and have greater leverage to gain financial independence and freedom through the support of a range of donors who now recognise the strengths of our organisation.” he said.

The programme encourages students to draw on indigenous knowledge, management theory, their own and others’ experience to develop effective and values-based approaches to managing community organisations.

To meet the needs of the NGO sector, the programme provides a strong emphasis on the practical application of learning to the real issues that students will be dealing with in their community organisations.

The programme focuses on issues that are not usually dealt with in business school such as fundraising and managing volunteers, and enables graduates to become active community leaders as tutors.

To formally graduate in the GDP course, students are required to successfully complete 120 credits, including seven core compulsory courses, dealing with issues such as culture and values, funding, governance, managing staff and volunteers, small team leadership

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and managing finances and a variety of optional courses, covering topics such as communication, research, social audit, social policy and treaty relationships.

GDP is a professional qualification that directly addresses the complexity of working in a NGO organisation, and highlights the differences between managing in the NGO sector and a business or government department.

Duru's GDP qualification has enhanced his leadership capabilities despite having other qualifications from reputable institutions.

"I have gained other qualifications and attended courses in the past but the Graduate Diploma in Not-For-Profit Management opened up new dimensions with its focus on mission and values, and community-based development. It's great that the programme gives respect to the traditional knowledge in the Pacific and builds on the wisdom that already exists. It's a programme that people in management and leadership positions in the Pacific NGO sector should all do, and I want to thank NZAID, PIANGO and Unitec for making it possible."

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