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Akonoanga Maori

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REVISION RECORD

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Education within the Cook Islands must give learners a solid understanding of their culture and a sense of identity which leads to a respect for cultural diversity and contributes to social justice and tolerance of world views that are different from their own.

The heritage of Cook Islands society includes cultural and natural aspects which determine social values, traditions, customs, practices, artistic expressions and language. These tradition-based creations reflect the Cook Islands cultural and social identity which are reflected in language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts. They also include medicinal, therapeutic, and healing practices, food procurement and preparation, and the use of plants and animals for everyday life as well as for ceremonial and ritual purposes.

These traditional aspects of human activity are important and must be preserved and passed on so that future generations can learn about their past, make sense of their present and ensure that future generations can also enjoy the same privilege.

The characteristics of traditional Cook Islands culture also has consequences in relation to teaching and learning strategies and provides indicators as to what approaches are likely to be the most effective for Cook Island learners.

Inclusion of traditional Cook Islands culture as a key aspect of what is taught in schools also offers opportunities in a range of other areas including: environmental sustainability, economic development and international education.

A critical challenge to the Cook Islands is to arrest the loss of language, culture and identity that has been occurring through the multi-faceted impacts of globalisation and the population movement to Rarotonga, and urban environments in New Zealand and Australia.

In this policy reference to Cook Islands' "culture and traditions" etc. recognises the unique individual culture of each island and the associated language differences. These differences must be protected and transmitted to future generations without being condensed into one generalised "Cook Islands' culture".

1. STATEMENT OF POLICY

Learners in the Cook Islands will be empowered to achieve their highest aspirations through knowledge and experience of their language, culture, values and heritage.

2. PURPOSE

Our education systems, policies and practices must empower everyone, young and old, to make decisions and act responsibly and in culturally appropriate ways to ensure the safeguarding and transmission of the important aspects of our heritage to our future generations.

In the past the transmission of the important aspects of our culture from one generation to another has mainly been done verbally. However with globalisation and the rapidly changing structure in the fabric and values of our society due to the technology revolution and other

western developments, the once customary practice of passing on these valuable aspects of society is under threat which could lead to our heritage either disappearing or being given little attention.

An understanding of educational processes in traditional society provides indicators to preferred teaching and learning approaches today which will lead to higher learner achievement. Knowledge of traditional customs also has consequences in being able to live in a more sustainable manner and offers opportunities for further economic development.

The MoE is committed to meeting the goals of:

- i.) *Learning for Life - Cook Islands Education Master Plan (2008-2023)*: places a key emphasis on the following focus and goals. The plan identifies many of the values which underpin and guide the development of education in the Cook Islands and determine the structures, processes, programmes and outcomes. They include:
- Taku Ipukarea Kia Rangatira is intended to strengthen a learner's identity as a Cook Islander. It is grounded in the language, culture, thinking, visions and aspirations of the people and has a sense of belonging and pride. It is for a future that is vibrant and fulfilling. This strength in Cook Islands identity is not at the expense of any other area of our lives.*
- Focus:** *Involves strength in Maori language, culture, perspectives aspirations and will provide a firm foundation for engagement with the wider world.*
- Goals:**
- *Improved Maori literacy at all levels of education.*
 - *Relevant learning and teaching styles and methods identified and developed.*
 - *Develop as a centre of excellence for all things Cook Islands.*
- The key aims for this focus area relate to:**
- *Ensuring success for learners through 90% of all learners reading at their chronological age at the end of Year 8.*
 - *Raising adult literacy by providing adult Maori literacy courses.*
 - *Increasing access of Cook Islanders to regional and international education programmes.*
 - *Improving achievement by implementing relevant learning and teaching styles and methods.*
 - *Attracting Cook Islanders and other interested students to study in the Cook Islands.*
 - *Providing the private sector with future employees with a strength of identity and desire for excellence.*
- These goals and aims will be achieved by developing and implementing action plans that:**
- *Identify the best approaches to learning and teaching for all learners in the Cook Islands.*
 - *Develop and produce resources across all essential learning areas in Maori.*
 - *Maximise the role of Cook Islanders as regional and as global citizens through high level participation in international programmes.*
 - *Provide skilled teachers, quality resources and relevant courses at all levels of learning.*
 - *Provide opportunities for every island to be actively involved in learning programmes on language and culture.*
 - *Create programmes that attract people to study in the Cook Islands.*

- ii.) “Meeting the aims of “Te Kaveinga Nui” - the National Sustainable Development Plan, which includes the priority area:
“ A Cook Islands where all people who reside in our islands can enjoy opportunities to fulfil their potential, prosper and participate in the social, economic, political and cultural life of our communities and nation” (pg 15).
- iii.) Supporting the themes of the Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) which include - *“Theme 1: Language and Culture. Culture has been defined by Pacific researchers as a shared way of life of a group embracing knowledge, understanding, skills, values, histories, myths, art and dance – expressed through language. Maintenance of Pacific languages is central to cultural preservation.*
- iv.) Meeting the goals of the UNESCO 'Education For All' policy, which recognises traditional knowledge and indigenous cultural heritage have a value and validity in their own right and a capacity to both define and promote development.

3.SCOPE

This policy applies to all parties who are bound by the requirements of the Education Act.

4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES and OUTCOMES

Outcome

Cook Island learners develop a clear sense of their own local cultural identity, built on a strong foundation of their own culture, language and spirituality, with a deep pride in their own values, traditions and wisdoms which are both protected and transmitted effectively to future generations.

Strategic Objectives

- Ensure the quest for successful New Zealand-type schooling does not lead to the demise of Cook Islands culture and heritage.
- That the cultural values, identity, traditional knowledge and language of the Cook Islands peoples are recognised, celebrated and protected by integrating aspects of it into the content of what is presented to learners at all levels of education.
- All education providers safeguard the self-confidence of learners and their pride and security in their own language and culture which are integral to the development of a positive sense of self and group identities.
- Improved Maori literacy at all levels of education.
- Relevant learning and teaching styles and methods identified and developed.
- Develop a centre of excellence for all things Cook Islands.
- Ensure the knowledge of traditional sustainable practice and customs are continued to strengthen and establish sustainable resource and environmental protection by all Cook Islanders.

- That Cook Islands culture is a key driver in establishing positive relations with the rest of the world.
- Cook Islands culture and traditional performing arts provide worthwhile opportunities for employment and national economic development.

5. Policy Detail

5.1 Context and Approaches

Formal education in the Cook Islands was introduced through the London Missionary Service in the 1820s (Vaiimene, 2003). Previously, education had been a matter for the family with children learning through watching their elders and listening to their advice. Traditional community leaders were soon of the belief that their children should have a formal education to prepare them for living in the wider world and not only the skills needed to continue living on their island. By the 1880's most children could read and write in local dialects of Maori. In the last 130 years, changes in governance structure and politics has brought many changes to the Cook Islands but the basic idea of formal education and western schooling models still stand. The models of education introduced were based on colonial understandings and interpretations of education. Regional writers have identified multiple aspects of this model that presented different ways of knowing and understanding than that traditionally used by the community. In line with the earlier suggestion of Vaiimene, Nabobo (1998) identifies learning in Pacific communities as traditionally through observation, imitation and participation. In the same paper, Ritchie and Ritchie support this with the addition that verbal interaction between the teacher-tutor and student instigated for the primary purpose of learning was very rare.

At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, school based teaching and learning strategies are still very much modeled on western models and therefore interactions involved in these strategies originate from different values and belief systems and utilize a different set of conventions for communication.

An important goal of the EMP is that relevant learning and teaching styles and methods be identified and developed. Cook Island learners communicate, participate and learn in patterns and conventions which are quite distinct and different from those found in New Zealand schools. Cook Islands culture values respect, generosity, loyalty, cooperation, sharing, humility, and fulfillment of mutual obligations which give rise to different speech rules and communicative behaviour.

These differences relate to the distinct values, beliefs and patterns of behaviour integral to Cook Islands culture and have particular significance with regards to teaching and learning approaches. Teachers and learners must create shared understandings and new contexts that give meaning to the knowledge and skills being taught. At the same time, the teachers must ensure that in the classroom cultural values, beliefs, knowledge, speech rules and learning systems are recognised, valued and built upon.

5.1.2 Priority Policy Instruments and Actions – Context and Approaches

Recognising these elements in current educational practice is a way of improving the quality of teaching and learning as they relate to learners in the Cook Islands. Such strategies include:

- Provision of learning experiences which involve participation, observation and imitation.
- Use of group learning as it involves the values of cooperation, good relationships, consensus, and respect.
- Allowing learners to teach and learn from their peers.

- Emphasising the importance of mutual participation in learning situations.
- Recognition that learners have a high degree of sensitivity to social cues and the emotional tone of the interaction.
- Recognition that verbal competence is developed through elicited imitation.
- Using strong peer orientation, and affiliation, cooperation and mutual task performance, where the operations learned are clearly related to the final goal.
- Use the wealth of experience, knowledge and skills the children bring with them from their home cultures to add on new skills and knowledge.
- Use traditional values, beliefs, world views, knowledge, speech rules and learning systems to organise their classrooms, communicate with and teach their students.
- Avoiding competitive and individualistic learning styles.
- Ensure the curriculum takes advantage of Cook Island values such as cooperation, reciprocity, sharing and respect and at the same time promote self-esteem of all students.

5.2 Language and Identity

Education must take into account local knowledge, cultural practices and values. The content of what is taught must include the aim of helping preserve and transmit national culture and customs and strengthen learners' cultural identity and knowledge of their heritage. Heritage reflects values shared by the society and through its heritage society recognises its identity.

National identity provides people with the knowledge of who they are, who others are and where they are from. For people to develop a devotion to their nation their unique culture, shared values, symbols, traditions and meanings must be maintained. National identity provides a sense of belonging. How a nation group is perceived directly relates to an individual's self-respect and self-esteem.

The value systems that have come to define education in general are increasingly based on western philosophies of education. It is essential there is an understanding of the need to ensure that the values and principles that relate to Cook Islanders belief systems, cultural identity, ideas and behaviours are intrinsically part of the developing education system to avoid inequalities and marginalisation and the demise of Cook Islands culture in the quest for successful western-type schooling.

Language is extremely important in strengthening individual and group identity leading to high self-esteem and self-confidence, the prerequisites to effective learning.

To avoid learners having weaknesses in both Cook Island Maori and English it is essential that a comprehensive language policy is developed that establishes an effective model which ensures all learners become proficient in both Cook Islands Maori then in English.

Educational research¹ has shown that second language acquisition can have different outcomes according to the status of the first language and culture. Where a learner has fluency and confidence in their first language there is little risk in losing their cultural identity, but when their

first language is weak there is a greater necessity for the second language therefore they are more likely to be assimilated into that culture and cease to relate to their first culture.

One useful approach to counter this is to adopt a bilingual language learning strategy in which the acquisition of a second language is a process of building on the existing competencies of the learner in his/her first language, which minimises detrimental or negative effects on the first language. Instead, second language acquisition becomes a mutually enhancing process for both languages.

5.2.2 Priority Policy Instruments and Actions – Language and Identity

- Use the Cook Islands language to contribute to the maintenance and promotion of the languages and culture, which define who Cook Islanders are.
- Incorporate locally produced resources relating to traditional culture and folklore in educational curricula, especially at primary school level.
- Review the effectiveness of the 2006 decision to offer three levels for bilingual language teaching in the Cook Islands and develop a comprehensive language policy in education and a language policy strategy framework.
- Create parent and family engagement activities that support Cook Island's language, culture, practices and customs.
- Improve the status of Cook Islands Maori Language in the wider community through prioritising Maori Language programmes for a three year period, recognising expertise in community and utilize it in development of high quality interactive resources and use community network to strengthen ownership of language programmes.
- Integrate Cook Islands Maori and cultural activities all aspects of the school curriculum at all levels of education.
- Collaborate with the Cook Islands Ministry of Culture in the maintenance and preservation of the Cook Islands' cultural heritage and language.
- Develop appropriate Cook Islands achievement standards within the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, which pertain to language, knowledge and skills specific to the Cook Islands culture.
- Improve the valuing of higher learning in the area of culture, as well further up-skilling in the area of heritage management through establishment of an 'Institute of Cook Islands Culture' which offers diploma and degree level courses.

5.3 Citizenship and Responsibility

Citizenship is about taking an active part in society. Education's role in citizenship is about enabling people to make decisions and take responsibility for their own lives and their communities.

It is about ensuring people can make a positive contribution by developing the expertise and experience needed to claim their rights and understand their responsibilities and preparing them for challenges and opportunities.

Programmes that will achieve this need to be broad in their scope and holistic in their approach. Programmes need to consider knowledge and understanding, skills and aptitudes and values and dispositions. Some of these are already embedded in our society and some will need to be responsive to change as the society around us changes.

Production and consumption patterns of any society depend on their culture and the subsequent values held. Factors that lead to the transformation of values and aspirations might lead to a shift in the value placed on available resources and whether or not resources are exploited or used sustainably. Culture is, therefore, a major determinant of sustainable development. Education must stress the shift of those values towards sustainable production and consumption patterns as existed in traditional Cook Islands society and focus on the importance of working with culturally specific views of nature, society and the world, fostering support for local practices and traditions which build sustainability.

Core traditional values relating to relationships, respect, reciprocity, spirituality, participation, resourcefulness and the value of land must be incorporated into both how and what is taught in our schools. The potential divergence between these personal and social values and organisation values, such as accountability and capacity building, must be recognised and resolved in a manner that does not override traditional values yet still leads to improvement.

5.3.2 Priority Policy Instruments and Actions – Citizenship and Responsibility

- Ensure there is a focus within the content of curricula on cultural practices and values pertinent to health, environmental management, fishing, agricultural and other production activities.
- Ensure that curriculum review, especially in the areas of social science and health, are cognizant of citizenship development and issues in the contemporary Pacific
- Ensure the curriculum takes advantage of Cook Islands values such as cooperation, reciprocity, sharing and respect and at the same time promotes
- Develop programmes around Education for Sustainable Development and Education for International Understanding
- Develop and implement policy to promote sustainable practices across the education sector of both human and physical resources.

6. Risk and Mitigation

The table below lists examples of possible consequences, along with mitigating actions, that relate to this policy not being adhered to:

<i>Issue/Risk -examples</i>	<i>Mitigation -examples</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of Cook Islands language, culture, and identity. • Few with knowledge of traditional literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Maori language programmes within all schools. • Adult literacy courses widely available. • Traditional elements of Cook Islands culture

<i>Issue/Risk -examples</i>	<i>Mitigation -examples</i>
<p>customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook Islands unable to make a unique contribution to rest of world. • A key tourism attraction may be lost. • National economic development limited. • Increase in crime and anti-social behaviour. • Lower learner achievement due to inappropriate teaching practices. • Accelerated population loss. • Unsustainable resource use. 	<p>included within curriculum at all levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural performance a regular part of all school activities. • Traditional values and sustainable resource use incorporated into the curriculum. • Establishment of an 'Institute of Cook Islands Culture'. • Incorporate local content into the national qualifications structure. • Ensure teaching and learning methods are appropriate for Cook Island learners.

7. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Monitoring is keeping track of the workings of a policy, noting whether the policy is referred and adhered to during the development of education processes and programmes.

Evaluation involves making careful judgements about the worth, quality and benefit of a policy. It provides feedback on the efficiency, effectiveness and performance of policy and is critical to policy improvement and innovation.

Review refers to implementing any required changes that have become apparent during the monitoring and evaluation processes.

- The Planning and Development Division will monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of this policy and report as required.
- The policy will be reviewed as per the policy register on an ongoing basis by the Director, Planning and Development.
- Feedback will be presented to key stakeholders in a range of modalities.