

Copyright © 2002, International Association of School Librarianship. No part of this paper may be reproduced for commercial gain without prior written permission of the publisher. Authors retain copyright of their own articles and should be contacted for permission to reproduce their articles or parts thereof.

School Libraries in the South Pacific Islands Nations: An Update Report

Paula Jones

University of the South Pacific Library, Fiji

The Pacific Island countries face many similar problems in the provision of adequate and appropriate school library services. Education in these countries is still developing, and school libraries are not viewed as integral components of learning. Funding is insufficient, if at all, and there is a general lack of support library services. This article updates Joe Hallein's 1991 report on Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Niue is included for the first time.

Introduction

This report looks at the school libraries in some of the independent island states of the South Pacific. These island states range in size from the 26 sq km of Tuvalu to the second largest island in the world, Papua New Guinea. The region has a population of around 5.8 million people, with a little over 4 million of these living in Papua New Guinea. The other 1.8 million people live in island groups scattered over 30 million sq km of ocean; only 65,000 km of that area is land. Most of the countries in the region are low-income countries with Gross National Product per capita ranging from \$US730 in Kiribati to \$US2,200 in Fiji. Phosphate-rich Nauru is the exception to this, with a GNP of over \$US12,000.

Melanesian, Polynesian, and Micronesian people live in the region, and all three peoples can be found in a single country like Papua New Guinea or the Solomon Islands. More than half the world's languages are spoken in this region, with more than 700 languages being spoken in Papua New Guinea alone and another 700 languages spoken in the other islands. Although the Polynesian countries such as Tonga, and Samoa have a common national language, there is no common language spoken in the Melanesian countries like Vanuatu or the Solomon Islands. In these countries Pidgin English has become a common language and is widely spoken. The lack of a common language has meant that there has been little local publishing, and most material used in schools and found in school libraries is in English.

Most Pacific Islanders still live in rural situations. About 90% of Solomon Islanders live in rural areas, and even in comparatively urbanized Fiji, only about 39% of the population live in towns and cities. Because most library services are found in urban areas, the vast majority of Pacific islanders have no access to any kind of library service, including school libraries.

There are few trained school librarians in the region. Some overseas volunteers have worked in school library services, and a few teachers have undertaken library training in one of the two library education programs operating in the region or have attended overseas library schools. However, few trained librarians actually go back to work in schools; rather, most are assigned to central school library services positions. The University of the South Pacific offers a Diploma in library /information studies, which includes an option in school librarianship. USP introduced a Certificate in basic skills in library /information studies in 1998-this looks broadly at user services in general, rather than specifically at school librarianship. The University of Papua New Guinea offers a diploma in educational studies (teacher librarianship) since 1990 as well as a bachelor's degree (not yet recognized by library associations such as the Australian Library and Information Association).

This general description of the Pacific area and conditions that relate to libraries is based of that provided by Joe Hallein in the 1991 edition of *School Libraries: International Developments*, edited by Jean E. Lowrie and Mieko Nagakura. Much of Joe Hallein's original description remains unchanged, but the description has been amended and updated to reflect current statistics and recent developments.

The following section presents reports from individual countries that have been prepared from information submitted from various agencies in

Table 1
The South Pacific Island Countries

Country	Status	Land Area (sq. km.)	Estimated Population (1994/1995)	GNP Per Capita \$US 1994
Cook Islands	Self-governing 1965	234	19,100	2,750
Fiji	Independent 1970 Declared Republic 1987	18,333	774,800	2,220
Kiribati	Republic 1979	810	78,400	730
Nauru	Republic 1968	21	10,500	12,000
Niue	Self-governing 1974	256	2,500	--
Papua New Guinea	Independent 1975	461,691	4,070,000	1,200
Samoa (formerly Western Samoa)	Independent 1962	2840	163,400	900
Solomon Islands	Independent 1978	27,556	367,800	1,200
Tonga	Independent Kingdom 1970	748	98,200	1,640
Tuvalu	Independent 1978	26	9,500	--
Vanuatu	Republic 1980	11,880	164,000	1,300

Source. This table was compiled from statistics selected from The Asia and Pacific review, 1997.

the countries themselves. Ministries of education and national libraries were approached to provide the information. A number of country organizations indicated that the statistics they provided were calculated informally, as there were no official school library statistics. Not all countries responded, so that updated and new information is provided for Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The information for the following countries remains as per the 1991 edition: Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, and Tuvalu. Table 2 presents the results of the questionnaire that was sent out to the countries.¹

Cook Islands

Education is generally free and compulsory for children aged 6 to 15 years old. There are 29 government schools that provide free education and six church schools and two private schools that are fee-paying. Altogether there are 37 schools in the Cook Islands, including three preschools, 10 preschool/ primary schools, 15 preschool/primary/secondary, four primary /secondary, and five secondary schools. The Education Department asserts that there are school libraries in 31 of these schools, but informed sources express skepticism at the reliability of these figures. Much depends on one's definition of school libraries. It is probable that these 31 schools contain some collections of books that are designated school libraries. Of these 31 school libraries, 29 are staffed by part-time staff with teacher training but no formal library training. These part-time staff are most likely to be teachers taking their classes to use the books.

Nukulere College Library and St. Joseph's Primary have reasonable functional libraries, and small school libraries are found in the secondary colleges. Avarua Primary School makes use of the public library. The libraries are not staffed by trained librarians, and the government does not provide funds for school libraries, so the collection consists of gifts and a few books purchased with school funds.

Four of the secondary colleges operate limited school-community libraries but they are open only one or two hours a day for a couple of days a week. The Cook Islands Library loans books to these school libraries for use by the pupils and the general public. The head of the Public Library also provides consultancy service to school libraries in the absence of any Education Department support services for school libraries

Fiji

At the beginning of 1998 there were 709 primary (elementary) schools and 143 secondary schools in Fiji. Education in Fiji is free, although parents do have to contribute to a school building fund for the school their children attend. Amounts vary from school to school. Although education is not compulsory, it is estimated that about 98% of children have attended primary school. Numbers drop noticeably once children reach their early teens as they are often required to work to support the family.

Table 2

Question	Cook Is.	Fiji	Niue	Samoa	Solomon Is.	Tonga	Vanuatu
Education							
Number of primary schools (including preschools)	13	698	1	157	540	116	389
Number of combined primary/secondary schools	19						
Number of secondary schools	5	148	1	44	22	40	42
Total number of schools	37	846	2	201	562	156	431
Is schooling free? Answer Yes or No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
	29 Govt only	Govt schools				Primary only	Primary only
Is schooling compulsory? Answer Yes or No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
If so, to what year level or age?	Age 15		Age 17	Age 14		Age 14 or competition of 6 years primary	Year 6
School libraries							
Number of primary school libraries	18 (incl. 1 prim./sec. library)	315	1	94 Govt schools only	n/a	50	Few
Number of secondary school libraries	14 (incl. 1 prim./sec. library only)	90	1	12 Govt schools only	22	41	16
Total number of school libraries	31	405	2	106 Govt schools only	n/a	91	n/a

Number of school libraries which are in the form of classroom collections	n/a	400	0	—	n/a	66	24
Number of school libraries which are in the form of centralized collections	n/a	300	2	—	11	0	16
Number of school libraries which are separate rooms in the school building	n/a	250	2	—	n/a	87	14
Number of separate library buildings	n/a	200	2	—	13	4	2
Number of joint community and school libraries	n/a	2	0	—	2	1	1
<i>Staffing in school libraries</i>							
How many staff work fulltime in the library?	0	10	1	—	3	25	5
How many staff work part time in the library?	31	50	2	—	8	66	4
How many staff have teacher training but no formal library training?*	29	50	0	—	n/a	15	2
How many staff have no teacher training and no formal library training?	0	200	3	—	n/a	76	Most
<i>Funding</i>							
How many school libraries receive government funds, excluding payment of staff?	0	n/a	2	—	n/a	0	0
How many school libraries receive other funds?	n/a	n/a	2	—	n/a	n/a	2
How many school libraries receive a budget for books and resources?	0	n/a	2	—	2	n/a	16
How many school libraries receive a budget for staffing?	0	n/a	1	—	2	10	5
How many school libraries receive a budget for facilities?	0	n/a	1	—	n/a	Few	n/a

*Formal library training consists of a recognized certificate, diploma or higher in library/information studies.

School libraries in Fiji were almost nonexistent before the 1970s, and schoolchildren in the urban centers of Suva and Lautoka relied on the public library for books, whereas rural students generally had no access to library services. In the late 1970s and until the coups in 1987, school libraries appeared to be making significant progress; however, since 1987 school libraries have suffered.

In 1991, Mel Rainey (1992) of University of the South Pacific Library carried out a study of 139 secondary schools, 80% of which replied to the questionnaire that asked about facilities, staffing, training, budget, collections, and library programs. Although the number of libraries had increased substantially following a 1979 study by the Ministry of Education, the basic necessities such as shelving, circulation area, tables and chairs were sadly lacking in a large number of these schools. Staffing of secondary school libraries by qualified people continues to be a serious problem. The study showed that of those schools that said they had a librarian, 71 % said that the person was in the library for less than 50% of the time. .

Training for librarians is offered through the distance education section of the University of the South Pacific, and although numbers in the program are high, the number of those people taking the school library option of the program remains low. The study showed that 52% of those in charge of libraries were qualified teachers, but had no specialized training in library information services; 11% had both teacher training and the USP Certificate in Librarianship; a further 9% were enrolled in either the Certificate or the new Diploma in Library Information Studies (which began in 1990); and around 28% had no training of any kind.

The two teacher training colleges train primary teachers, and although both have libraries, neither college appears to have an active program for training teachers in the basic skills of using the library. Nor does there appear to be much done in promoting the library in the school. The Fiji College of Advanced Education trains teachers for junior secondary. Again, the program has no basic course on the role of the library in the school. On several occasions, staff from the USP Diploma program have done several guest lectures for the students. Workshops for librarians are offered on a sporadic basis, and more often than not the key factor involved is finances. Library Services of Fiji continued to be responsible for school libraries.

The study showed that budgets for library materials were most inadequate: 45% of the schools had no regular yearly budget, and 82% of those who did receive a yearly budget received less than \$F2,000 per year. Only 5% of the schools had a library budget of more than \$F5,000. Collection development has at best been hit and miss: 41 % of the schools stated their collections consisted of pre-1970 material. Quick reference materials such as encyclopedias, yearbooks, almanacs, atlases, and dictionaries were extremely weak, with percentages as high as 80% stating that they had no such materials or only badly outdated materials.

The area of services or programs offered by the libraries was particularly weak; even basic activities such as displays, helping students locate materials, and reading to students did not appear to be an important role for the librarian or library to play in the school. Roughly only one third of the schools stated they were attempting to carry out some of these activities.

In late 1994, a similar study was carried out in the primary (elementary) school libraries (Rainey, 1994). A total of 325 schools with enrollments over 175 students were sent questionnaires similar to those sent to the secondary schools in 1991. A total of 245 (75%) of the schools returned the questionnaire. Of the schools that responded, 56% indicated they had a library, 51 % stated they had a separate room or building for the library, and 62% said they had classroom collections. Those schools that had no library facilities of any kind were found mainly in rural areas. The basic furniture such as tables, chairs, and shelving were generally lacking.

Training for librarianship and staffing of libraries continues to be a serious problem. Although the study found that 85% of the schools had a person in charge of the library, 69% of the schools said these people spent less than 25% of their time in the library. Of the people in charge of libraries, only 3% have both teacher training and library training, 80% are teachers who are also responsible for a classroom, and 14% have no teacher or library training.

Budgets are woefully inadequate. The Ministry gives \$F30 per child for materials and supplies, but school committees are responsible for raising money for library materials. Of the schools reporting, 68% had no yearly budget, and only 3% stated their budget was over \$F5,000 per year. A total of 74% of the schools stated their collection development depended on gifts. Regarding the size of their collections, 56% stated that they had fewer than 1,000 volumes, and only 3% had more than 5,000 volumes. Collections are generally outdated and inadequate to meet the needs of students and teachers.

Little was being done in developing library programs-activities like storytelling, reading, and introducing books to children are not done on a regular basis. The basic skill of using a dictionary was being taught in 70% of the classrooms. The skills of skim reading for important points and using an index had not been taught to 80% of the students by the time they left primary school. In only a small minority of schools did there appear to be any close cooperation in planning and team teaching among teachers and librarians.

Education in Fiji faces many serious problems. Schools in urban areas are greatly overcrowded. Primary school classrooms with more than 50 students are not uncommon, and for the first three years of the secondary schools the conditions are much the same. There is a serious shortage of teachers, and a large percentage of teachers have little or no training. There is a great need for curricula at the school level and in the teacher training colleges to be revised and updated. Certainly the lack of finances is a problem as well but,

in the opinion of a growing number of people, the greatest problem is the lack of vision, long-term planning, and strong leadership. Leadership and vision must begin with the Ministry and filter down to the various levels.

Niue

Niue is a tiny Pacific Island that has two schools, a primary and a secondary school. Schooling is free and compulsory to age 17 (since 1995). The schools follow the New Zealand school curricula, and their libraries have been developed in recent years to support the implementation of the curricula. Because of this, access to new information technology is more advanced than in many other Pacific Island school libraries. Both schools receive budgets from the government for library materials. The libraries are staffed by people with no teacher or library training. The following descriptions of each school library have been provided by the Curriculum Development Officer at Niue High School.

Niue High School Library

The Niue High School Library, with assistance from NZODA, became a central learning area in 1997 when major renovations took place. These renovations included installation of a ceiling and fans to provide a dust-free environment, the purchase of two computers with CD-ROMs for student use, and of a number of CD-ROMs such as *Encarta*, *TV New Zealand Encyclopedia*, *Maps*, and *Oceans*. This expenditure was seen as necessary to enable the library to support the implementation of the New Zealand school curriculum. At present, the library has no furniture, and tables and chairs are needed for the library to be used effectively as a resource learning center. It is hoped that funding will be available in 1998 to provide this badly needed furniture.

The library plays a central role as a resource center for student research in all curriculum areas. In addition, junior fiction books and nonfiction books on a number of topics were purchased from the 1996-1997 recurrent school budget. Assistance from a number of private sources, such as visitors to Niue and the Wellington Rotary Club, have resulted in the purchase of further books and CDs. Specific areas of the collection were targeted for development, such as senior fiction from both New Zealand and other Pacific states, books of poetry, and books on sailing and other water-related activities. CDs purchased include *Print House*, *Birds of New Zealand*, *Coast to Coast*, *Antarctica*, and *Volcanoes*. The students have become active users of the library, making good use of the new technology. In addition to computers for student use, two were purchased for staff use, and these are located in a work area attached to the library.

One full-time and one part-time library assistant process new books, issue books for student use, and supervise and assist the students in using the library. Neither has any formal qualifications as either teachers or librarians, but both have had a week's professional development with the Niue Public

Library, learning the basics of cataloguing. Both are quick learners and have adapted readily to the changes, but both would benefit greatly from formal library training in the future. A teacher in charge of the library provides professional leadership.

In the future, books and nonbook resources need to be built up so that students have access to the best materials available. Professional development for the library assistants is necessary to enable them to run the library as efficiently as possible and to support curriculum delivery effectively. Furniture appropriate to the new function of the library needs to be purchased. The cataloguing system needs to be upgraded to meet the learning needs of the students. All students need to be taught to use the library as a learning center and to gain the research skills that will enable them to make the best use of resources available.

Niue Primary School Library

Junior fiction books and nonfiction books have been purchased from the 1996-1997 recurrent school budget. Assistance from the Wellington Rotary Club has resulted in the purchase of further books. Other books have been purchased from donations from private individuals. The school also uses the Ashton Scholastic Book Club to purchase additional books.

The teacher aide for the school is also the part-time library assistant. She has no formal qualifications either as a teacher or a librarian. Purchasing of books is done by the principal and the library assistant. At present, the library has no ceiling. It is located close to the road, and dust is a problem. There are no tables or chairs in the library.

Niue Primary School, like the Niue High School, is teaching the New Zealand curriculum, and the library will need to be upgraded to enable this curriculum to be delivered effectively. Book and nonbook resources need to be built up so that students have access to the best materials available. Professional development for the library assistant is necessary to enable her to run the library as efficiently as possible to support the students and staff effectively in their use of the library. Furniture such as tables and chairs needs to be purchased. A ceiling would reduce the dust and damage to books. The use of talking books and the introduction of technology such as listening posts would enhance the students' literacy skills.

Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands is an archipelago consisting of a double chain of six large islands and many small ones. Eighty-seven languages are spoken throughout the Solomon Islands, and there are many different cultures. Education is not compulsory, and some fees are charged to attend school. As of November 1997, there were 540 primary schools in the country: 53 community high schools, extensions of primary schools, offering forms 1-3; 16 provincial secondary schools offering forms 1-5; and seven national secondary schools offering forms 1-6. Of the total of 23 secondary schools, six are

run by churches, two are run by the government, and 15 are administered by provincial governments. Primary schools, community high schools, and provincial secondary schools are the responsibility of provincial governments, with the national ministry of education playing a coordinating and funding role. Current government policy is for libraries to be a part of the education process.

School libraries were first established by the churches in mission high schools and in government national high schools. Each of the 23 secondary schools has some sort of library, with collections ranging from 1,500 books to more than 8,000 books in the two national high schools. The relevance of materials is becoming important and has become a factor in national secondary schools developing book budgets. Most material is still, however, donated from overseas. The School Library Service of the National Library acquires, processes, and distributes books to the secondary school libraries. Most of these books are donated or purchased with funding assistance from overseas donors, as the National Library budget for school materials is minimal. The School Library Service also conducts inservice courses for teachers running libraries and has, in conjunction with the Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education, produced a manual for secondary schools called *Using Your Library: A Handbook for School Librarians and Students*. To date there are no teacher-librarians, and the school librarian is usually an English teacher who is assigned the library as an extra duty. Three secondary schools, however, employ full-time staff.

At present, there are only two established primary school libraries in the country, the Honiara International School (formerly Woodford) and Chung Wah, which is administered by the Chinese Association in the country. A few of the 538 other primary schools have small collections of books, mostly donations. Most schools do not have a library. In 1980 the Solomon Islands National Library established the children's and school library service, and in 1983 the service began a bulk loan system of providing each primary school with a box of 50 books. There have never been enough books. In an attempt to help provide primary schools with educational resources, six provincial Educational Resource Centres (ERC) were established in 1984, in conjunction with the local provincial library, with World Bank funding. An inservice educator is attached to each centre with the responsibility of promoting the use of educational resources at the centre and assisting the teachers in developing their own resources, using the materials in the centres as a model.

Samoa

Schooling in Samoa consists of primary, junior, and senior secondary levels. The system comprises public and private sectors, with public schools run by the government and private schools run by missions and boards of trustees. About 82% of all primary and secondary schools are under the government, and 17% are mission operated and 1 % are privately run. Schooling in Samoa

is not free. However, the government provides free stationery to all government primary schools. Table 3 provides a summary of the number of primary and secondary schools in Samoa.

Primary schooling covers eight years and is divided into lower primary (years 1 to 3), middle primary (years 4 to 6) and upper primary (years 7 and 8). Children enter primary schooling at the age of 5. A total of 35,723 students are enrolled in primary schools, taught by a total of 1,480 teachers. Primary education is compulsory under the Education Amendment Act, 1991/1992 for all children from ages 5 to 14 until the completion of primary schooling (year 8). The primary enrollment rate has increased to well over 90% since the introduction of compulsory education.

Secondary education covers a five-cycle from years 9 to 13 with a three year junior secondary program (years 9 to 11) and a two-year senior secondary program (years 12 to 13). Secondary schools enrol about 13,356 students who are taught by about 755 teachers. A dual system operates in the government system, with junior secondary schools offering years 9 to 11, some schools now offering years 9 to 12, and senior secondary schools offering years 9 to 13.

The language of instruction in government primary schools from years 1 to 6 is Samoan. English is introduced as a subject at the year 4 level. The medium of instruction at years 7 to 8 is English. In secondary schools, English is the medium of instruction in all subjects except Samoan.

Of the 165 government schools, 106 schools have libraries, including 94 primary schools, 9 junior secondary schools, and three senior secondary schools. Most of these libraries are located in specially designed rooms. Only a minority of schools have libraries as separate buildings. The school libraries are mostly looked after by teachers in the schools. Mission and private schools also have libraries. There are two public libraries, one in each of the two main islands: the Nelson Memorial Public Library in Upolu and the Salafai Public Library in Savaii. The two libraries are both under the umbrella of the Department of Education, and they provide service to the schools and

Table 3
National Summary of Schools of Samoa by Level and Status (as of April 1997)

Level	Total Number	Government	Mission	Primary
Primary	157	140	15	2
Junior Secondary	26	22	4	0
Senior Secondary	18	3	15	0
Total	201	165	34	2
Percentage	100%	82%	17%	1%

Source. Department of Education, Planning and Research Unit, April 1997.

the community. Since the devastating cyclones of the 1990s, the book and film mobile library service to the rural schools has ceased. The cyclones also destroyed the joint school-community library that was established at Fagamalo, Savaii, in 1985.

Tonga

Education is free in state schools and is compulsory for all children between the ages of 6 and 14. Most students leave school after form 4. There are 111 primary schools in the kingdom: 99 are government schools and the rest are run by various churches. There are 40 secondary schools, and only eight of these are government schools.

As in most Pacific Island countries, school libraries in the kingdom of Tonga were first established in secondary schools, and these were established to meet the requirements of the New Zealand Education Board because Tonga students studied for New Zealand secondary qualifications. Because most Tonga secondary schools are church-run, the actual level of library provision varies greatly between schools. Some schools, such as the Mormon schools, have modern, Western-style school library centres, whereas other schools have libraries that are really only book storage rooms. There are some separate libraries in the government primary schools; some primary schools have classroom collections of books, but there are no centralized school library programs.

Secondary school libraries are generally staffed by library assistants, some of whom have completed the University of the South Pacific Library Certificate. A few church schools have volunteer, trained teacher-librarians. By 1998, all government secondary schools had received a regular library budget, covering both the salary of school librarians and the purchase and maintenance of library books. Nongovernment schools have no specific library budget, and hence what libraries receive depends on the priorities of the individual school. The four Roman Catholic secondary schools all have useful libraries with partly trained, part-time library staff. They have a fair range of fiction and nonfiction books. Purchase of books usually depends on outside assistance, and following a financial shortfall there has been a reduction in teacher numbers, resulting in some library staff being used as occasional relief teachers.

The School Library Services unit, established by the Ministry of Education in 1985, is no longer in operation. There is a Tonga Library Association that works to promote all libraries in the kingdom and also conducts workshops for school library staff.

Vanuatu

Vanuatu (formerly known as the New Hebrides) inherited a dual school system from the French and English governments, which ran the country until 1980 as a sphere of joint influence, the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides. Today, a common curriculum up to year 10 is taught in

the nation's schools, but some schools teach in English and others use French. Theoretically, primary education is now compulsory and free, although government schools ask for regular donations, and private schools are fee-paying. Fees are charged in all secondary schools. In 1997, there were a total of 389 primary schools serving some 31,747 children; there were 42 secondary schools, most catering for students to year 10 only (expansion to year 11 in 29 schools is expected in 1998). Selection examinations at year 6 and year 10 levels mean that only 20% of primary level students ever reach secondary school, and then only 20% of these students are able to move on to year 11 and the senior secondary cycle.

Except in the two urban areas at Port Vila and Luganville, there are few primary school libraries. These range from a separate library room or building to a few books kept in cupboards in the head-teacher's office. As far as is known, there are no trained teacher-librarians at the primary level, and collections of materials are usually looked after by a teacher as an extra duty.

All the country's secondary schools have libraries, and three teachers have enrolled in the Diploma in Library/Information Studies program at the University of the South Pacific. These are studying in their own time and with their own financial resources to upgrade their library knowledge and skills. The Lycee Louis Antoine de Bougainville, Malapoa College in Port Vila, Matelevu College in Santo and St. Patrick's College, Vureas in the island of Ambae have full-time librarians with various levels of qualification.

There are no central school library services in the Ministry of Education, nor is there any Ministry policy on the development of school libraries, although, for the first time, in 1997 the Ministry of Education included a library development seminar in its program for the annual Secondary School Principals' Conference. No government funds are allocated for the purchase of school library books, and schools must make allocations for their own library materials and equipment from their own modest budgets. Most new stock is donated by friendly overseas donor organizations and agencies.

In the vast majority of Vanuatu schools, libraries are seen as a luxury, and until it is recognized that libraries can play a central role in both formal and non formal education, until adequate collections can be built up, and more *Ni Vanuatu* (as the people of Vanuatu are called) teachers are trained in the use of libraries and their resources, this will remain the case.

Conclusion

The Pacific Island nations face a variety of problems in establishing and maintaining quality school libraries. For the most part, school libraries in the Pacific are underfunded and understaffed. School libraries have not improved in the seven-year period since the 1991 report. If anything, in some countries, school libraries are worse off. Sometimes worthwhile school library initiatives, such as the community libraries in Fiji, lapse because of a lack of impetus in following through with the projects. In other cases, such as

Samoa's school-community library at Fagamalo, Savaii, a devastating cyclone can undo all the initiatives and the project is not re-established.

The problems relate to a lack of perception among education departments and ministries and related government bodies as to the central role school libraries should play in education. These problems can be summarized as follows: lack of vision, lack of commitment, lack of leadership and implementation, lack of training, and lack of funds.

The provision of adequate school libraries and services remains a long way in the future. The question remains for organizations such as IASL as to how they can assist and promote the development of better libraries in this region.

Notes

¹The author wishes to acknowledge with thanks the following people who assisted in the gathering of statistics:

Cook Islands: Patricia Numa (USP Centre Library, Cook Islands), Education Department
 Fiji: Mel Rainey (USP Library), Kesa Tuikoro (Library Service of Fiji)
 Niue: Maryanne Talagi (USP Centre, Niue), Shirley Price (Curriculum Development Officer Niue High School)
 Samoa: Sinapi Moli (for the Director, Department of Education)
 Solomon Islands: Peter Asaph (Solomon Islands College of Higher Education SICHE Library)
 Tonga: Lucy Moala-Mafi (Ministry of Education), Judy Ewing (Education Regulation), Maree Johnson (Information and Research Officer- Tonga Library Association)
 Vanuatu: Anne Naupa (MaIapoa College), Alison Taylor (Junior Secondary Inservice Teacher Trainer)

References

- Asia and Pacific review: The economic and business report.* (1997). (16th ed., pp. 142-196). Saffron Walden, UK: World of Information.
- Lowrie, Jean E., & Nagakura, Mieko (Eds.). (1991). *School libraries: International developments* (2nd ed.). Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow.
- Rainey, Melvyn D. (1992). School libraries in Fiji. *Australian Library Review*, 9(3), 199-208. Reprinted in Laurel A. Clyde (Ed.), (1996). *Sustaining the vision: A collection of articles and papers in school librarianship*. Castle Rock, CO: Hi Willow.
- Rainey, Melvyn D. (1994). *Primary school libraries in Fiji*. Unpublished manuscript.

Author Note

Paula Jones works in the Training section of the University of the South Pacific Library in Suva, Fiji. She originally trained and worked as a school librarian before working in public libraries as a children's librarian. She has taught librarianship for the past 12 years.