

**A QUALITATIVE STUDY INTO  
PACIFIC PERSPECTIVES ON  
CULTURAL OBLIGATIONS AND  
VOLUNTEERING**

**A Research Project  
Carried out by the Pacific Section and the  
The Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit**

**Taimalieutu Kiwi Tamasese, Tafaoimalo Loudeen Parsons,  
Ginny Sullivan and Charles Waldegrave**



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# PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

## Background: Government Policy on Volunteering

The New Zealand Government is committed to recognising voluntary work within the many communities that make up New Zealand's multi-ethnic society, and has responded to the requests by Pacific Islands peoples (amongst others) for their community and voluntary work to be particularly recognised. Government policy is administered and upheld by the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) of the Ministry of Social Development (OCVS, 2002), and reads as follows.

### Government Policy on Volunteering

**Given that volunteers make a vital contribution to social development, the economy and the environment, government endorses the following policy on volunteering:**

#### Vision

A society with a high level of volunteering, where the many contributions people make to the common good through volunteering and fulfilment of cultural obligations are actively supported and valued.

#### Recognition

Government recognises that:

- volunteers are found in wide-ranging spheres of activity, including sports, arts, heritage, emergency services, social services, health, education, recreation, human rights, tourism, conservation and the environment
- volunteers offer their time and expertise of their own free will, out of commitment to their community, and to fulfil cultural obligations
- the nature of volunteering varies widely depending on different cultural expectations and the nature of the task
- volunteers give their time unpaid and should have the opportunity to gain benefits in return, such as new skills, and a sense of belonging and achievement
- volunteers should not replace paid workers
- volunteering is an essential element of civil society.

#### Commitments

To support this vision, government is committed to:

- valuing and celebrating the contributions of volunteers
- recognising the contribution that *tangata whenua*, Pacific and ethnic peoples make to their communities through fulfilment of cultural obligations
- ensuring that volunteers have appropriate protection under law

- ensuring good practice in volunteer programmes which government directly manages
- encouraging community and voluntary organisations to develop and maintain good practice in supporting and involving their volunteers
- reducing barriers associated with volunteering in legislation, policy and practice
- supporting initiatives to increase understanding of, and to disseminate information about, volunteering.

### **Implementation**

Government expects all government agencies to:

- take into account the needs of volunteers and their organisations, and the costs associated with volunteering, when developing policies and delivering services
- consult volunteers and their organisations on policy and operational changes that impact on volunteering
- have policies in place that support the private volunteering activities of staff while ensuring that public servants continue to fulfil their professional obligations.

**(December 2002)**

## **Purpose of the Report**

This qualitative study into Pacific people's conceptions of volunteering and cultural obligations grew in response to the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector's request for proposals for research on cultural obligations and volunteering 'with a particular focus on Pacific peoples in Aotearoa, New Zealand'.

The Government Policy on Volunteering reproduced above describes a vision of 'a society with a high level of volunteering, where the many contributions people make to the common good through volunteering and fulfilment of cultural obligations are actively supported and valued'.

To pursue this vision, the nature of volunteering and cultural obligations needs to be well understood in order to inform the development of policy that will be able to consider how new or existing initiatives impacting on volunteers can be developed in a way that takes into account Pacific people's volunteering within their communities.

The Government's 2002 Volunteering Policy Project described volunteers as 'those who, of their own free will, undertake unpaid work outside their immediate household, to benefit the common good'. It was noted, however, that while 'free will' distinguishes volunteering from coercive situations, many people (including tangata whenua, Pacific peoples and ethnic peoples) feel a sense of obligation to contribute unpaid time to their communities. It therefore became apparent that concepts of and beliefs about cultural obligations and 'volunteering' must be examined and defined from within the communities (an emic view) rather than understood only within the context of a Western, monocultural society.

The OCVS document, 'Volunteering and Pacific Peoples', addresses the issue of definitions. If a monocultural notion of 'volunteering' is applied to certain activities carried



out by non-Western peoples, then it is clear that the definition may exclude, mis-identify and distort any understanding of the nature and importance of these activities within their cultural context. The document therefore makes the following points (points 6–9):

**Pacific People’s definition(s) of ‘volunteering’**

1. ‘Volunteering’ is a foreign concept in the traditional cultures of Pacific peoples. There are activities that Pacific peoples engage in, however, that are conceptually similar to volunteering. Any definition of volunteering for Pacific peoples needs to take these activities into account.
2. These traditional cultural activities are closely associated with concepts of:
  - to serve
  - duty to care
  - a requirement in order to sustain the community
  - a cultural obligation or expectation
  - a form of love and reciprocity relating to kinship and protocol.
3. Pacific peoples do not, therefore, necessarily associate the unpaid work they undertake to contribute to the community, or to fulfil cultural obligations, as ‘volunteering’.

Pacific peoples would be concerned if government used one generic definition of ‘volunteering’ in government policy, if it conceptually excluded the cultural equivalent of ‘volunteering’ undertaken by Pacific peoples. This would risk excluding Pacific peoples from government support for volunteering.

There is an absence of literature and research which compares the practice of volunteering with fulfilment of cultural obligation. This creates policy and operating problems for government when:

- allocating funding to support ‘volunteering’
- developing policies that impact on ‘volunteering’
- collecting data on ‘volunteering’.

A fuller understanding is required of the nature of unpaid activity in New Zealand which is undertaken for the common good – for instance:

- What are these activities?
- What terms best capture the nature of the activities (e.g. ‘volunteering’, ‘fulfilment of cultural obligation’ or other)?
- What motivates people to engage in their communities in these ways (e.g. what are the cultural drivers)?
- What meaning and value do people of different cultures, ages, localities (etc.) attach to these activities?

It was therefore decided to carry out research into the concepts of cultural obligation, unpaid work and volunteering amongst Pacific people living in New Zealand, first of all, by completing a literature review; secondly, by conducting research amongst Pacific groups within New Zealand through case studies of six projects of pride, and analysing people's

contributions and motivation; and thirdly, by inviting people to take part in Faafaletui of focus groups in order to deepen discussion and understanding of the main concepts and themes arising from the research questions, the literature review and the fieldwork.

We commend the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector for taking up the challenge to explore Pacific people's conceptions of volunteering and cultural obligation. We submit this qualitative report in the hope that it will contribute to a fuller picture of Pacific people's involvement in their communities and the wider society in which they live.

## **Aims, Objectives and Research Questions**

The aims, objectives and research questions of this qualitative study into Pacific perspectives on cultural obligations and volunteering are set out below.

### **Research Aim**

This research aims to explore the concepts of cultural obligation, volunteering and unpaid work amongst Pacific people living in New Zealand.

### **Research Objectives**

- To identify Pacific people's worldviews of volunteering and the values and meaning systems that underpin such views and associated social practices.
- To identify the range and nature of unpaid activities in which participants engage.
- To determine which terms, concepts and associated models best capture the nature of unpaid activities for Pacific people.
- To explore what motivates Pacific people to engage in unpaid community activities.
- To identify the meanings and values Pacific people attach to these activities.

### **Research Questions**

- What are Pacific people's world views of volunteering and what values and meaning systems underpin such views and associated social practices (including variations by ethnicity, age and locality)?
- What is the range and nature of unpaid activities in which participants engage?
- What terms, concepts and associated models best capture the nature of unpaid activities for Pacific peoples, e.g. volunteering, fulfillment of cultural obligations or others?
- What motivates Pacific peoples to engage in unpaid community activities? What are the cultural drivers?
- What are the impacts of voluntary activity on Pacific peoples and/or their families?

These research aims, objectives and questions will extend understanding of Pacific conceptions, meanings, values, and practices of volunteering and cultural obligations.

## Design and Methodology

The research was conducted by the Family Centre, which has a three tikanga organisational structure made up of Maori, Pacific and Pakeha sections. This study was led by the Pacific Island Section in association with the Social Policy Research Unit and the Maori Section.

The project was carried out in partnership with the Faafaletui of the reference group whose membership consisted of people from Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Fiji and Tokelau as well as representatives from the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs.

The in-depth exploration into Pacific conceptions of volunteering and cultural obligations was made possible by the commitment of the Faafaletui of Pacific research facilitators and the Faafaletui of Pacific writers. Furthermore, the study drew on the wisdom, knowledge and support of key Pacific elders from each of the Pacific nations who participated in this research, enabling the research to explore Pacific people's conceptions and descriptions of voluntary and cultural obligations in a rigorous manner.

We explored appropriate protocols and etiquette that would enable us as Pacific researchers to utilise the best research methodologies (including Pacific methodologies) in the context of this work. We were guided by the notions of va fealoaloai and respect. Va fealoaloai is underpinned by the concept of face-to-face communication in the building of relationships.

We kept before us the following questions:

- How do we as Pacific researchers carry out face-to-face communication about the use of each other's methodologies in the new technological age?
- How do we stay true to fluidity of meaning when transcribing oral data into the written word, and also present meaning in translation authentically?
- What is the Pacific protocol that is going to acknowledge more than just authorship?
- How do we as Pacific researchers acknowledge the communities from whose cultures and experiences these methodologies are conceived, and maintain and honour reciprocity?
- How do we balance openness in the research process with confidentiality?

We consider that the development of a culturally appropriate methodology with which to carry out the research is essential to obtaining meaningful and useful participation of Pacific peoples in this project. Cultural oversight, and an appropriate consultation process, was built into the research design. As will be demonstrated below, the need for a culturally appropriate process was expressed through the choice of methods in the research, particularly the use of Faafaletui or fono processes in the case studies, of Faafaletui focus group interviews, and consultation with and feedback to participants. At all stages, the staff of the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector and other relevant personnel were clear that the design process included meaningful input from appropriate people within the participating groups. The research process was also designed to meet the aims, objectives and key questions as identified in the Request for Proposal on Cultural Obligations and Volunteering.

The Faafaletui approach was chosen for this study as it provides both a research framework and processes that respect uniqueness and distinctiveness while at the same time enabling the development of relationship and the ability to draw a consensus. It is underpinned by values of respect, humility and the honouring of peoples, ensuring that each of the Pacific Nations and cultures represented in this research is acknowledged and their

knowledge valued. The Faafaletui methodology also made possible the resolution of complex methodological issues, and paid serious attention to cultural perspectives, etiquette and protocols as well as upholding the primacy and expression of the various Pacific languages used in the research.

This approach provides a system of relating between the Faafaletui of the reference group, the focus group facilitators, the researchers and the participants. Further, it provided a process of 'tui', or the weaving together of the findings from the three stages of this research – the literature review, case studies and focus groups.

Issues of power in the research process are increasingly being addressed across a range of social science research fields within New Zealand (Te Awe Kotuku, 1991; Teariki, Spoonley & Tomoana, 1992; Tamasese, 1994). A number of Pacific researchers have raised the need for culturally appropriate methods when research is carried out within Pacific communities (Tupuola 1993; Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave, 1999). If research is authentically to acknowledge the concepts and experiences of Pacific peoples, then research methods need to be based on the cultural world views of the participants. Using a methodology that grows from the indigenous knowledge of the Pacific ensured that the participants were able to express their own experiences, opinions and understandings in their own languages.

While the Faafaletui focus group approach was chosen for this project, it was not seen to be exclusive or dismissive of other Pacific approaches.

## **Literature Review**

A literature review of relevant overseas and New Zealand-based literature related to cultural obligations and volunteering, and a detailed account of how the terms 'cultural obligation' and 'volunteering' are defined, was completed as part of this project. The literature review also addressed the terms, 'unpaid work', 'civic engagement' and 'community participation'.

## **The Six Projects of Pride: The Case Studies**

The case studies, or projects of pride as they have become known, were originally to be of 'high profile Pacific volunteers drawn from a range of voluntary settings including two young people'. However, given the nature of the project and the relational and collective world view of many Pacific cultures, the research team proposed the alternative consideration of projects of pride. Instead of focusing on the achievements of individuals within specific projects, the research team, Faafaletui facilitators and the reference group to the project agreed that an approach more consistent with Pacific values be taken and that communities and cultures should choose areas of activity which they themselves developed and felt pride in.

The case studies were based on those Pacific nations with the highest populations resident in New Zealand: Samoa (115,000), Cook Islands (52,500), Tonga (40,700), Niue (20,100), Fiji (7,000) and Tokelau (6,200).<sup>1</sup>

For each of the projects of pride, between three and eight contributing members were interviewed. The members were selected according to their levels of engagement in the project as well as project members collectively selecting who they thought were the most appropriate to speak on the project's behalf.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures used are sourced from Statistics New Zealand (2002).

Many of the projects were located in more than one site in New Zealand and the Pacific. The regional locations where the various projects were located is shown in the table below.

<b>Project of Pride (Culture/Ethnicity)</b>	<b>Regional Location</b>
Matauala Hall (Tokelau)	Wellington, Porirua, Tokelau
Fiji Canterbury Social Services Trust (Fiji)	Christchurch
Niue Island Soldiers in World War I (Niue)	Niue, New Zealand, United Kingdom, North Africa, France
<i>Siu Ki Moana</i> National Library Exhibition (Tonga)	Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Tonga
Atiu Project (Cook Islands)	Auckland, Atiu, Cook Islands, Wellington, Porirua
<i>So'o</i> Project (Samoa)	Auckland, Wellington, Asau, Nofuolii

The ages of those interviewed regarding various projects tended to reflect the history of the project. Therefore almost all of those interviewed were elders. Contributions by younger people were sought and are specifically included in the projects of pride case studies where possible. The gender of those interviewed for the case studies was determined by the projects themselves. In some projects those interviewed were mainly women and in others the genders were evenly balanced.

We include information about the specific selection process that was undertaken for each of the projects of pride.

### **Tokelau Case Study**

The selection of the Matauala case study project of pride was managed by the Tokelauan reference group member, Ioane Teao, and the Tokelauan Faafaletui focus group facilitator, Paula Faiva. They consulted elders about the research project and the need to identify a project of pride for Tokelauans in New Zealand. After the consultation process and discussions with elders, a consensus was reached. The decision was significantly based on the fact that Matauala was one of the first Tokelauan projects to be established in New Zealand.

### **Fiji Case Study**

The Fijian case study project of pride was managed by the Fijian reference group member, Kelera Uluviti, and Arieta Tabua, the Fijian Faafaletui focus group facilitator. They consulted Fijian elders, the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs Fijian staff and members of the Fijian community in Wellington. They all agreed to highlight the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust as the first Fijian social service established in New Zealand.

### **Niue Case Study**

In November 2005, the Family Centre research team and Rev. Lagi Sipeli worked together to identify a Niue project of pride for this report. Wally Ranfurly, a Niue elder of Porirua, joined in the consultation. Niue elders who met at the Family Centre on 9 December 2005 were asked to help select a project they felt was a source of pride and inspiration for them. Niue's involvement in the First World War was chosen.

This idea was also presented to the Niue elders Faafaletui focus group in February 2006. Elders asserted that the story of Niue's response to New Zealand's wartime vulnerability was appropriate for the purposes of the research project. Wally Ranfurly arrived at the Family Centre that day holding a copy of Margaret Pointer's *Tagi tote e loto haaku – My heart is crying a little: Niue involvement in the Great War 1914–1918* that had been located by the research team at the New Zealand Defence Force HQ Library in Wellington. The research team approached Margaret Pointer, now residing in Japan, to ask if she would provide a summary of the book for this project of pride. She generously and efficiently did so.

### **Tonga Case Study**

The Tongan project of pride was managed by the Tongan Faafaletui focus group facilitator, Tanusiakihelotu Taniela Vao, in consultation with Tongan reference group member, Dr Ate Moala. Tanusiakihelotu discussed the research project with Tongan elders and together they decided that the Tongan community case study would be the Wellington Tongan community contributions to the National Library exhibition *Siu ki Moana: Reaching across the Pacific*.

### **Cook Islands Case Study**

The selection of the Cook Island project of pride was managed by the Cook Island Faafaletui focus group facilitator, Kitiona Taura. Cook Island reference group member, Jean Po Mitaera, also contributed to the consultation and selection. Wellington Atiu Island Trust and specifically the contributions made to the Atiu hostel-building projects were put forward as this project of pride. After the consultation process and discussions with elders, a consensus was reached that the case study would be the Atiu Island Trust as the first enua group to be established in Wellington. More than 30 years after the establishment of the Wellington Atiu group, all of the other inhabited enua of the Cook Island group now have an enua group.

### **Samoa Case Study**

The selection of the Samoan project of pride case study was managed by the Pacific Section of the Family Centre. Samoan elders and community members were invited to consider possible projects to represent the Samoan project of pride for this research. The So'o between Afeafe o Vaetoefaga and Hoani Waititi was nominated. The Samoan elders agreed and a consensus was reached between the Pacific Section and the Samoan member of the reference group, Rosetta Iupeli, that this So'o would feature as the Samoan project of pride.

### **Faafaletui Focus Groups**

As noted earlier in this chapter, the use of Faafaletui focus groups as one of the methodological strands of this research grew out of consideration of several factors. Matters of great importance and depth in the Pacific are discussed and deliberated in collectives or fono (see Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave, 1997). The key point about collectives being the natural forum of discussion on matters of importance is that these collectives include many people who occupy different roles and have different status within a community. The various roles and statuses provide their incumbents with certain perspectives, knowledge and learning that deepen and extend any discussion on critical matters. The collective discussion of key matters is 'particularly significant in light of the Pacific practice of consensus formation and ideas of solidarity' (see Goldsmith, 1993).

Faafaletui focus groups were organised according to the cultures described in the case studies, as well as Pan-Pacific Faafaletui focus groups that included a range of Pacific nations of smaller populations now resident in New Zealand. This was to ensure the inclusion of a representative population and that the language of exploration would be congruent with the cultural background of participants.

## **Pacific Research Skills Gleaned from this Project**

- Setting up a Pacific research methodology – Faafaletui.
- Conducting Faafaletui groups in Pacific languages and English.
- Knowledge of Pacific etiquette and protocols in the research process.
- Using the two principles of Va Fealoaloi (underpinned by notions of face-to-face communication in the building of relationships) and respect.
- Analysing the base material in Pacific languages.
- Writing up the first draft in Pacific languages.
- Conceptual translation from Pacific languages into English.

## **Ethics and Confidentiality**

The entire project was guided by the following research ethics:

1. Research design, parameters and methodologies must be set up or overseen by Pacific people.
2. Research design, parameters and methodologies must be culturally safe.
3. There must be recognition of primary accountability to the research participants.
4. Research design, parameters and methodologies should include inquiry into all the interlocking issues.
5. Research design, parameters and methodologies should always be evaluated by this basic question: ‘Who will benefit from this production of knowledge?’ If Pacific peoples do not benefit directly from any research carried out on them, with them or about them, then research is but a continuation of colonisation.
6. Research parameters, design and methodologies should be underpinned by values of respect, responsibility, mutuality and accountability primarily to Pacific peoples.

Participants' safety and rights included the following:

- the right not to participate;
- the right to confidentiality;
- protection of participants from exposure to physical/mental stress;
- researcher accountability to the participants and the communities involved;
- guardianship of specific and tapu knowledge;
- acknowledgement for their gifts of knowledge;
- the formation of a reciprocal relationship between researchers and participants.





## PART TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

This literature review aims to create a picture, to bring focus on to issues of volunteering and cultural obligation amongst the Pacific community in New Zealand. There is an absence in the literature and research of comparisons between the practice of volunteering and the fulfilment of cultural obligations, and because there is very little written specifically on these topics, completing the literature review is like constructing a wheel, with the spokes in place but a near non-existent hub. I hope that by throwing the spokes into sharp relief, it may be possible to reveal something of what is in the centre.

The review first of all defines the key terms of this project: Pacific people, volunteering and cultural obligation. It also defines related terms: social capital, civic engagement, capacity building, nonprofit sector, unpaid work and social security.

It then paints a profile of the Pacific community in New Zealand. It gives an outline of cultural identity and values, with an indication of what creates a sense of wellbeing and harmony. Cultural understandings of these concepts are shown to be very important.

An account of ethnocentrism is given to highlight the fact that terms and labels have cultural meaning.

As a way of examining all the meanings and implications of volunteering and cultural obligation, there is an extensive survey along the economic continuum from gift-giving to remittances, with an account of migration in this context and reference to the cultural meaning of money.

Next there follows an appraisal of policy issues relevant to the voluntary sector and cultural obligation as they apply to the Pacific community in New Zealand.

The Bibliography at the end of this report presents the results of a literature search that includes all the items referred to in this Literature Review, plus additional items found elsewhere in the total report.

### Defining Terms

It is important in any study to define terms. It is also important to identify clearly the fact that terms have cultural meanings. As Robinson and Williams state, 'attention needs to be paid to the terms on which different actors in society engage, and to ensure that the positions of different groups are recognised and that they are included in their own terms' (Robinson and Williams, 2001, p. 52). Such understandings have implications for policy-making and for social equity. If terms are used loosely or with cultural bias or limits, then appropriate and inclusive policies are unlikely to be made.

In the context of this study, the terms that need defining are **Pacific people, volunteering, cultural obligation, social capital, civic engagement, capacity building, nonprofit sector, unpaid work** and **social security**. For the purposes of this literature review, it is important to be familiar with the various definitions of these terms, and their applications and meanings within different contexts.

As well as defining terms, this section identifies studies which discuss the significance of these definitions from different cultural perspectives.

## Pacific Island People

'Pacific Island people' is, as Pasikale and George write, 'a term of convenience that assumes homogeneity' (1995, p. 24). In fact, the Pacific population of New Zealand is heterogeneous and is made up of people from three main cultures (Polynesian, Melanesian and Micronesian), and from several different Pacific Islands countries (see also Spoonley, n.d., pp. 11–12). Generally, six Pacific countries are cited as making up most of the population: Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Fiji and Tokelau (see NZIER, 2003; Pasikale and George, 1995; Statistics New Zealand, 2002). In addition, there are Pacific migrants and populations in New Zealand from Kiribati, Tuvalu, Solomons, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Nauru and other small nations in the area.

A useful summary of facts about Pacific countries is given in Lakshman, 2002, pp. 173–9.

## Volunteering

*The Report of the Ministerial Reference Group for the International Year of the Volunteer 2001* (Department of Internal Affairs, henceforth referred to as DIA) presents the United Nations definition of volunteering:

The United Nations have identified three basic criteria to distinguish volunteering from other types of human activity:

- It is not undertaken for financial gain because voluntary action is not rewarded with a wage or salary.
- It is undertaken of one's own free will, although the decision to volunteer may be influenced by personal feelings of obligation to society or one's own cultural traditions.
- It benefits a third party or society at large. Actions that benefit only the person who volunteers or that cause harm to society do not meet this criterion. (DIA, 2001, p. 18)

The DIA also identified its own core definition of volunteering as 'a two-way exchange of humanity. For many people, voluntary activity is centred in the heart, while at the same time being very real, practical, specific and immediate. ... Volunteering is an activity that involves reciprocity ...' (DIA, 2001, p. 18). It describes volunteering as formal (activities involving churches, schools, organisations etc.), and informal (activities involving neighbourhood and community support) (DIA, 2001, p. 6).

The formal definition of volunteering that is used in Australia (developed by Volunteering Australia) is quoted by Murray Millar in his study of gift-exchange and volunteering in Melanesia:

... an activity that takes place in not-for-profit organisations and is of benefit to the community and undertaken of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion; for no financial payment; and in designated volunteer positions only. (Cordingley, 2000, p. 73; quoted by Millar, 2004, p. 8)

He identifies four key elements in volunteering:

1. free choice
2. community-focused work
3. work managed through nonprofit organisations
4. no financial remuneration for volunteers (Millar, 2004, p. 5).

The Volunteer Centre of New South Wales Training Workshops defines volunteers as:

... people who give time and services of their own choice and they do so without pay. 'Without pay' means that expenses can be claimed and paid if possible. Expenses can include 'basic living expenses' ... a volunteer's service benefits others ... It serves more than one's own immediate family group. (The Volunteer Centre of New South Wales Training Workshops, 1996, p. 5)

Crocombe's account of voluntary service in the Cook Islands acknowledges that while 'most staff of voluntary organisations are part-time and unpaid', those who work full time generally receive a small wage (although this is often less than 'the market value for their services') (Crocombe, 1990, p. 51). The issue of payment, whether for incidental costs or at a low level, is less important than the role, motivation for and nature of the work undertaken within voluntary organisations.

In all of these attempts to define volunteering and volunteers, the qualities of free will, help, acting for the benefit of others within the community and the lack or paucity of payment are present.

Some studies stress the independence of voluntary agencies: voluntary institutions are 'maintained and supported solely or largely by the free will offerings or contributions of members or subscribers, and are free from state interference or control' (Dewdney, 1969, p. 2). Te Momo also refers to the notion of voluntary agencies having autonomy (Te Momo, 2003, pp. 114–15).

Two salient characteristics ('Organisations that 'care for others' and/or involve participation by 'free will' ') are cited in the Ministry of Social Development publication, *He waka kotuia* (Report of the Community-Government Relationship Steering Group [referred to from this point as Report], 2002, p. 7). Voluntary organisations are typically regarded as those that carry the idea of charity and of serving or caring for others (Report, 2002, p. 35).

But there are other important aspects of volunteering that must be identified. First of all, as Millar (2004) points out, the definition of volunteering involving free will is rooted in the Western idea of 'modern economic concepts that are now central to capitalist thinking' (Millar, 2004, p. 6). It is also often closely aligned with Christian values of service and altruism (Millar, 2004, pp. 7, 14). Margaret Catton (1959), in her study of social service in Hawai'i, gives a good description of the history of volunteering, and especially of its makeup in a society that has been colonised and only comparatively recently opened up. While she aligns volunteering with social philanthropy in a broad and compassionate way, there is no recognition in her book of indigenous volunteering or social services. Rather than looking at the existing social fabric, she refers back to Western ways of dealing with those in need:

In any newly opened country, means for combating social ills introduced by unscrupulous foreigners inevitably follow those established in older civilizations for meeting comparable problems. (Catton, 1959, p. 8)

This brings us to the crucial issue in the definition of volunteering: the term is variously defined by national bodies and voluntary organisations, but only by understanding the cultural references the term includes and embodies is a full understanding possible.

Millar stresses that different cultures use different lenses to view volunteering (Millar, 2004, p. 10). If volunteering is philosophically linked to a Western history of altruism and charity, it will not encapsulate ideas that come from other cultures and traditions that rest within a web of social relationships that are centred on notions like obligation and reciprocity, that are more face-to-face, and which always focus on the community rather than the individual. At the same time, if the concept of volunteering assumes that individuals from nuclear families help others (whom they may or may not know) because of values of 'helping', 'charity' and 'philanthropy', then the concept will not include extended family dynamics and both intrafamilial and intragenerational connections between people (see Millar, 2004, p. 12). Millar also gives a useful account of non-Australian cultural perspectives of volunteering, notably Maori and Melanesian (Millar, 2004, pp. 10–16).

Pollard's account of Solomon Islands women defines the concept of volunteering as *waka fo tangio nomoa*, which means to work in the private or public spheres for no reward except 'thank you'. The concept is built on the spirit of communal living and the reciprocity of customary practice that imbue the culture (Pollard, 2003, p. 457).

The New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils' publication on the participation of ethnic peoples in volunteering in New Zealand identifies the fact that 'There are a large number of perceived, and genuine, racial and cultural barriers to volunteering for ethnic people' (2005, Executive Summary, 1.2), and analyses these barriers and ways to overcome them. While acknowledging that there are 'cultural barriers', it argues mainly from the position of new immigrants learning the 'Kiwi way of doing things'.

Several studies in New Zealand argue more appropriately that, as it stands, the term volunteering is European and its social connotations and applications are also European (DIA, 2001; Ministry of Social Development [referred to as MSD from this point] MSD, 2002a and b; Pasikale and George, 1995; Robinson and Williams, 2001; Te Momo, 2003). This means, firstly, that the use of the term must be seen for what it is, in each context in which it is used, and, secondly, that it must be given new meaning and salience if it is to be applied safely within other (i.e. Maori and Pacific Islands) contexts.

As the DIA report says,

Attempting to include Maori and Pacific perspectives of volunteering, an 'Aotearoa New Zealand' definition of volunteering proved a challenging and fascinating task.

Volunteering is a predominantly European concept. Maori and Pacific peoples participate in unpaid activities to a disproportionately high degree, yet do not tend to identify with the term 'volunteer'. (DIA, 2001, Section 5, p. 18)

In the Maori context, the term volunteering is used less than *manaakitanga*, which means caring and sharing with others. Robinson and Williams in the Abstract to their paper on social capital and voluntary activity make the distinction 'between giving (European concept of volunteering) and sharing (Maori concept of cultural obligation)' (Robinson and Williams, 2001, p. 52). Further to this, the Ministry of Social Development document *He waka kotuia* states,

The concept of 'voluntary' work is European in origin and not one that sits comfortably with Maori culture and values. For Maori, there is no sense of 'other' within the whanau, hapu and iwi, and no direct equivalent to the term 'volunteering'. It has been suggested this is likely to be a significant factor in Maori consistently under-reporting their 'voluntary' contribution in census and other research. Working together for the benefit of whanau, hapu and iwi is a concept intrinsic in nga tikanga Maori, and not considered 'voluntary' in the sense of 'self-chosen' or serving 'others'. (Report, 2002, p. 35)

The MSD report, *Volunteering and tangata whenua (Maori)* gives a similar exposition of volunteering within a Maori context:

7. *Volunteering for tangata whenua is based upon the notion of whanaungatanga (kinship) and the benefits derived from contributing to the common good. There is no direct equivalent word for 'volunteering' in te reo Maori. Similar concepts relate to activity which is unpaid and carried out in a context of cultural obligation, duty, reciprocity and collective benefit. Aroha (love), tikanga (justice, order, the right way of doing things), manaakitanga (the implementation of aroha, caring for each other), mahi aroha (working willingly) and mahi koha (working as a contribution or gift) are concepts of tangata whenua similar to volunteering.*
8. *Whereas volunteering is often thought of as helping 'others', voluntary activity of tangata whenua is more often about working within a group for the mutual benefit of group members. For many tangata whenua the motivation for such activity flows from passion and commitment towards their whanau, hapu and iwi. This in turn is linked to a desire to enhance their community's sense of cultural identity and overall wellbeing.* (MSD, 2002b, pp. 1–2)

Similarly,

For Pacific peoples and other ethnic groups where the extended family forms the primary focus of social interaction, many areas of caring activity, community participation and advocacy on behalf of family members would not be perceived as 'voluntary' ... For Pacific people, caring and advocacy become a matter of obligation and duty with priorities determined by the community or extended family on the issues or needs to be addressed ... . (Report, 2002, p. 36)

The MSD document (2002a) *Volunteering and Pacific peoples* attempts to define Pacific people's concept of volunteering as follows to distinguish it from the more typical Western definition that is generally referred to in New Zealand policy-making:

6. *'Volunteering' is a foreign concept in the traditional cultures of Pacific peoples. There are activities that Pacific peoples engage in, however, that are conceptually similar to volunteering. Any definition of volunteering for Pacific peoples needs to take these activities into account.*
7. *These traditional cultural activities are closely associated with concepts of:*
  - *to serve*

- *duty to care*
  - *a requirement in order to sustain the community*
  - *a cultural obligation or expectation*
  - *a form of love and reciprocity relating to kinship and protocol.*
8. *Pacific peoples do not, therefore, necessarily associate the unpaid work they undertake to contribute to the community, or to fulfil cultural obligations, as volunteering.* (MSD, 2002a, p. 1)

During research conducted by Robinson and Williams, the Pacific perspective emerges clearly as ‘that of a village. There were expectations that all would work together for the good of the whole, and be generous in gifting time and resources. This was seen as enhancing the whole village’s status’ (Robinson and Williams, 2001, p. 65). The dichotomy between the Western and Pacific perspective is clear from the following participant’s statement:

I do voluntary work for Age Concern – get offered money for petrol. To me there is no need for payment; I do it for love. I learn a lot from elderly people, share their culture, so I learn how to live in New Zealand. I look after my troubled nephew and get offered a benefit. I was raised in a family that doesn’t expect payment. The only work I’m not paid for is when I visit in the hospital. Maybe we have to make our own definitions. (Robinson and Williams, 2001, p. 65)

The DIA report on volunteering sums up the questions around the term voluntary as follows:

The term ‘volunteering’ did not have meaning for Pacific peoples because, from a young age, all family members were trained to help and were expected to participate in community activities. Exchanging services at different times was seen as the basis of that participation. Pacific families looked to their extended family for support for projects. A person’s status in the community also was a factor in getting people to assist with projects. High expectations were placed on family members to complete a task and fewer people had to carry the load of providing a pathway for others.

These Maori and Pacific people’s perspectives of volunteering challenge the European definition and raise a number of interesting questions such as: How relevant is the concept of free choice? Is what we define as volunteering in Maori and Pacific communities in fact unpaid work? Or is it that the three criteria used by the United Nations are too restrictive? (DIA, 2001, p. 19)

There is another important aspect of volunteering that has emerged from the literature. It is expressed most cogently in a doctoral thesis written by Oliver Helena Fiona Te Momo in which she attempts to ‘demystify’ the relationship between Maori and voluntary work. She argues ‘that the Maori ideology of collective participation has been co-opted in the emerging conflict of neo-liberalism to provide social services in communities which government agencies exploit’ (Te Momo, 2003, p. iv). In other words, in societies where unpaid work is part of the value system and practice (as it is so prevalently in Maori and Pacific Islands communities), governments cynically and knowingly exploit these values and behaviours and

abdicate their own responsibility towards certain groups within society. In presenting her own story at the beginning of the thesis, Te Momo writes:

Unpaid work was a social obligation performed for the betterment of the whanau. The notions of free will or philanthropic activity were not represented in our epistemology of unpaid work. The underlying motivation to participate in unpaid work was the knowledge that to work the land that fed and housed the whanau required unpaid labour. This knowledge spiritually bonded the members to the concepts of reciprocity and mutual responsibility. (Te Momo, 2003, p. 3)

She argues historically that –

Voluntary associations are identified by Walker (1990) as the key community activity that helped Maori adjust successfully into urban life. (Te Momo, 2003, p. 5)

For Maori, participating in voluntary associations strengthened the new types of Maori communities and provided a way to address social problems by taking on the responsibilities to care for families. However, the vehicle for this early strength, the integration of Pakeha values and ways of working may also be seen to have contributed to the undermining of Maori ways of doing things that manifested Maori identity and values through Maori ways of working. (Te Momo, 2003, p. 6)

Thus, not only were Maori voluntary organisations co-opted by government to do the government's work, but also Maori were disenfranchised and stripped of cultural status and integrity in the process.

Te Momo goes on to argue that 'Maori were used as a commodity to produce unpaid labour and conditioned into believing they were of an underclass' (Te Momo, 2003, pp. 112–13). By identifying and appealing to the Maori concepts of *awhi* (assist, help, support), *aroha* (love, respect, sympathy) and reciprocity, governments in New Zealand transmogrified innate Maori practice and belief into services 'that appeared to be addressing problems deriving from government policy – responsibility for economic and social fall-out 'handed back' to the community' (Te Momo, 2003, p. 8). A Maori sense of responsibility 'was co-opted by the need/greed of the State' (Te Momo, 2003, p. 9), and a process of devolution actually placed responsibility for the social needs of the people onto the community, at the same time that social welfare benefits and community support were withdrawn (Te Momo, 2003, p. 143).

In Te Momo's thesis, volunteering is subverted by government for its own ends, and the values and motivations which link its expression in Maori society with Western governmental aspirations and philosophies are cynically exploited. She concludes: 'For Maori, voluntary work has been exploited, unrecognised, and the people have felt abused' (Te Momo, 2003, p. 246).

The dynamic that Te Momo identifies has been noted by others studying the Pacific region, but from a different viewpoint. Whereas the focus of her thesis is on power relations and the co-opting of cultural values, others have identified that in traditional and/or developing societies, implicit cultural values can be appealed to in order to encourage a level

of civic engagement that is expressed through voluntary activity. Pitt, writing about tradition and progress in Samoa, explains how, especially since the Second World War,

... the administration, in conjunction with international bodies, has attempted to utilise traditional communal institutions for specific economic activities or development programmes. It was thought that individuals might derive traditional satisfaction from working in a communal group towards a common goal, and that this might engender 'the will to improve', 'the desire to pull oneself up by one's bootlaces' ... (Pitt, 1970, pp. 141–2)

In a study of Pacific NGOs, Davenport writes, 'Volunteering is about recreating or strengthening a traditional idea of people supporting and assisting one another in communities' (Davenport, n.d., p. 6). By entering 'inside' the local culture, such encouragement for development can resist aspects of prescription and colonialism that are apparent when values and institutional ideas are imposed from the outside. Davenport also writes, 'Development must be driven by those who seek to develop, and it cannot be done to others on behalf of third parties – however benign' (Davenport, n.d., p. 1).

Murray Millar's study of gift exchange and volunteering in Melanesia 'proposes a gift-exchange mode for assisting an NPO [nonprofit organisation] to make formal volunteering culturally appropriate in Papua New Guinea' (Millar, 2004, p. 2). While formal volunteering is embodied in caring and sharing, which are natural elements of Melanesian culture (Millar, 2004, p. 14), to encourage volunteers,

... it is important that ways are found to incorporate concepts of volunteering so that they fit in with local cultural paradigms, in particular gift-exchange. It is proposed that approaching volunteering using gift-exchange concepts may make volunteering more appealing and also enhance the status of formal volunteering in Papua New Guinea. (Millar, 2004, p. 33)

Thus, by tapping into social values, the adoption of volunteering is encouraged so that it can grow to meet social needs in the society studied. Millar specifically presents the case study of an Australian nonprofit organisation working in Papua New Guinea (the Adventist Development and Relief Agency) that uses local volunteers. A similar project involving expatriate volunteers in Papua New Guinea is described in Bryant et al, 1982.

### **Cultural Obligation: An Expression of Social Capital or Beyond**

The next important term that requires definition is cultural obligation. This is a complex concept that is dealt with variously by anthropologists and other social scientists analytically and empirically. Because it includes and is based on notions of values, philosophies and beliefs as well as behaviours, it is harder to define than volunteering.

A useful dissection of volunteering and cultural obligation is given by Robinson and Williams, who start with the broad notion of social capital which they define as 'the collection of resources to which an individual or group has access through their membership in an ongoing network of mutual acquaintance. ... Social capital is often realised through involvement in forms of voluntary association ...' (Robinson and Williams, 2001, p. 54). They go on to examine the Maori model of social capital, identifying values embedded in the



family (whanau), the extended family (hapu) and tribe (iwi), which are encapsulated in this model.

[Maori] social capital is created through networks and relationships that are within all of these expressions of ‘family’ (or community). Thus, in the Maori context, the distinction between cultural and social capital disappears. ...

A Maori concept of social capital emphasises the following elements:

- Extended family relationships are the basis for all other relationships. The whanau is the nucleus of all things. Maori community values and norms come from traditional values that are rooted in the whanau.
- It is essential to have knowledge of, and to know one’s place in, Maori society, which is multi-dimensional, covering the geographical place to which one belongs as well as a place within the hierarchy of whanau, hapu and iwi where one belongs.
- Relationships in Maori society develop around informal association rather than formal organisations. The connectedness that is derived from this association is an extended consequence of whanau and iwi relations. The nature of this social capital may not be articulated but its value is understood.
- The holistic, integrating nature of relationships and networks are of primary importance, while their use or functional activity is secondary. Family, tribal and community networks may take priority over functional contracts with specified agencies such as health, education or welfare. (Robinson and Williams, 2001, pp. 55–56)

It is in the *values* that emerge from the discussion of social capital that the idea of cultural obligation becomes clearer. As Robinson and Williams write, ‘For Maori, community refers more to cultural obligation than to voluntary activity’ (Robinson and Williams, 2001, p. 60). In other words, the concept of community involves ideas of obligation rather than the free will implicit in most definitions of volunteering. Robinson and Williams link the concept of cultural obligation with notions of reciprocity, but specify that this ‘is not immediate and cannot be specified’ (Robinson and Williams, 2001, p. 60). It is not, in other words, a market-led notion, but one embodied in a sense of belonging within a community, where activities are engaged in as part of a social network but not necessarily to ‘buy’ some form of reciprocal activity in the future. As Millar writes, ‘social obligations, rather than personal choice, drive behaviours in Maori society that are today in western cultures commonly associated with volunteerism’ (Millar, 2004, p. 11).

The notion of duty is aligned with that of obligation:

In a European context, volunteering is often defined as an activity involving free choice. Maori and Pacific peoples, however, generally see voluntary activity as part of their duty or obligation to family and the community. (DIA, 2001, p. 9)

(See also MSD, 2002b, point 9, where there is reference to the fact that while fulfilling cultural obligation ‘looks like volunteering’, it is not the same as volunteering.)

Ethnographic accounts of relationship, especially between generations or between migrants and home-based kin, often focus on values of obligation and reciprocity. Fajans’

account of the Baining in PNG describes what she calls a ‘cyclical process of reciprocity’ in which –

... as children grow old and parents age, children are expected to support parents and become food givers to them. This is seen as a form of delayed reciprocity for indebtedness incurred in childhood –

and such behaviour is ‘the key to understanding the order of Baining social structure’ (Fajans, 1997, p. 74).

The concept of obligation is implied in the primary values of Tongan culture that Mike Evans identified in his study of gift exchange:

... Tongan gift exchange based on ‘ofa (love and generosity), faka’apa’apa (respect), and fetokoni’aki (mutual assistance). All kin, quasi-kin, and political relationships are expressed in some combination of these terms. (Evans, 2001, p. 57)

(See also Heather Young Leslie, 1999, especially for details of the role of women and the meaning of obligation in a Tongan village.)

Pitt’s account of Samoan traditions and economy gives a similar typology of fa’asamoa values, for example, ‘prosperity and wealth are thought to depend on the pooling of resources in concerted co-operation’ (Pitt, 1970, p. 27). (See also Chakraborty, 2004, who describes the sharing rules surrounding the giving of fish as part of a set of social obligations in Tonga.)

Fleming et al (1997) describe the dynamics of reciprocity as the main currency and connection between generations in Pacific families: children are first supported by parents, but once they earn they are expected to return that support. This is done from a sense of obligation, and the foundation for all relationships is reciprocity and a sense of obligation. This is expressed most clearly in the study in the fact that Pacific families show communal responsibility for financial matters (Fleming et al, 1997, p. 69).

Helen Morton Lee’s account of Tongans overseas focuses on the concept of fatongia, or obligations to kin. While one of the Tongan terms for remittances is kavenga, meaning ‘a burden or load’, it also refers to a sense of obligation (Lee, 2003, p. 30). And she goes on to equate obligation with love, quoting from Vete (1995).

James (1991) equates the sense of cultural obligation in the Tongan context with altruism and love (‘ofa) on the one hand, and a sense of self-interest and the need to meet kinship and relationship requirements on the other. In a later study (1997), she concludes that the senders of remittances do not care so much about how the remittances are used as about the fact that they have fulfilled their obligation, and that the sending of gifts and remittances promotes cohesion between migrants and their families. She writes that goods from Tonga are increasingly used because of their cultural significance to forge personal, quasi-kinship relations within the migrant population; and conversely to maintain ties and fulfil obligations (James, 1997, p. 3).

Cultural obligation by implication involves relationship, and the expression of cultural values within a specific social/community network. For example, Te Momo says that volunteers ‘do this work motivated by a mixture of culturally embedded aroha and as a response to the close and unmet needs of their communities’ (Te Momo, 2003, p. 12).

Efi (1995) argues, in a speech entitled 'The meaning of Pacific identity', that church construction projects in Pacific societies are often funded by appeals to traditional obligation, backed up by reference to Christian virtue. He condemns this practice because it places unreasonable demands on individuals and families, and is cynical in its exploitation of cultural values.

Cultural obligation can therefore be loosely defined from these perspectives as a sense of duty involving ideas of reciprocity that are embedded in cultural values and social relationships.

There is no clear literature which discusses the relationship between volunteering in the Pacific Islands community in New Zealand and cultural obligation. While it is acknowledged that there are many activities which fulfil cultural obligation that go unremarked in the statistics about volunteering, the tension between the two is only implicit in the literature, not explicit.

## Other Useful Terms

There are several other terms and concepts that emerge frequently in the literature on volunteering and cultural obligation. They are civic engagement, capacity building, nonprofit sector, unpaid work and social security.

**Civic engagement** is a concept that is frequently cited in literature about volunteering, cultural obligation and what is known as 'the third sector' (see also *Third Sector Review*, 2002).

Co (2004) examines and attempts to define civic service in East Asia and the Pacific, and shows how it has been linked to colonialism and the role of the state, with volunteering emerging out of it as a more democratic response to social needs. She does not arrive at a clear definition, however.

Lakshman (2002) describes the civil social organisations of the major Pacific states; while Klingelhofer and Robinson (2002) discuss relationships between civil society organisations and the law in the South Pacific.

Robinson and Williams (2001) discuss the notion of civic engagement in relation to the role of community organisations: civic engagement is expressed through networks of coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (they cite the work of Robert Putnam in relation to this), occurring in the community and including 'functional relations and structure such as the political regime or the legal and judicial system' (Robinson and Williams, 2001, p. 55). Civic engagement is an expression of networks, and the networks are in turn an expression of social capital. As already noted in the earlier discussion of social capital, Robinson and Williams argue that Maori concepts of family are inclusive of the concept of community, and thus in the Maori context the distinction between cultural and social capital disappears. Civic engagement, which refers to state structures in which relationships are less face to face, is thus less relevant in the Maori and, arguably, in the Pacific Islands context.

**Capacity building** is defined by Davenport as –

... an aspect of development that is specific to context and time and is ongoing. It is neither a set of packaged training manuals nor a training programme. ... [It is] 'an explicit outside intervention to improve an organisation's performance in relation to its mission, context, resources and sustainability'. By this yardstick capacity building is necessarily complex, long term, costly,

dependent on skilled facilitators, owned by the local NGO and difficult to measure. (Davenport, n.d., p. 1)

Low and Davenport define capacity building and highlight distinctly Pacific perspectives of the concept (Low and Davenport, 2002, p. 368).

The nonprofit sector in the literature is distinguished from philanthropy, which is regarded as a part of the nonprofit sector:

- The *private nonprofit sector* ... is a set of private organizations providing a wide variety of information, advocacy, and services.
- *Philanthropy* ... is the giving of gifts of time and other valuables (money, securities, property) for public purposes. Philanthropy, or charitable giving, is thus just one form of income of private nonprofit organizations. (Salamon and Anheier, 1997, p. 13)

**Unpaid work:** In the 1995 statistical profiles of Pacific peoples, Statistics New Zealand defines unpaid voluntary work in the 1991 Census ‘as work respondents did which would benefit people outside their household or family. Examples of unpaid voluntary work include assisting in cultural groups, sports coaching, church work, helping to run a club, and helping a neighbour’ (Statistics New Zealand, 1995, Samoan study, p. 55).

The report went on to say,

In some cases, [Samoan] views of voluntary work may not reflect this definition. It is likely that the running of church activities, cultural groups, or sporting teams is seen as a part of everyday community life by many [Samoans], rather than as voluntary work. To this extent, the degree to which [Samoans] are involved in voluntary work could be expected to be greater than the [13 percent] average. (Statistics New Zealand, 1995, Samoan study, p. 55)

The report published data on levels of participation and hours of involvement.

The 1998 Pacific Islands profiles published by Statistics New Zealand no longer gave this definition and replaced the term ‘voluntary work’ with the term ‘unpaid work’. The Census data gathered in response to these categories included information on participation, hours of involvement and types of work undertaken. Unpaid work thus becomes a broad, less defined category that is perhaps a catch-all, but does not acknowledge the nature and range of unpaid work undertaken by Pacific Islands peoples in New Zealand.

The entire issue of volunteering and cultural obligation can be seen globally in the context of **social security**. Historically, social security in the West has emerged as a state-funded and originated system that has replaced community obligation. While embedded in notions of altruism and philanthropy, social security has been a construct in societies that encapsulates previous, lost or disintegrating values that focused on community rather than individual.

Whereas, as Dalmer Hoskins argues in the first chapter of *Social security at the dawn of the 21st century*, social security has been criticised as having effects such as ‘the end of traditional family ties, the undermining of the work ethic or the elimination of individual savings’ (Hoskins, Dobbernack and Kuptsch [eds], 2001, p. 3), it can equally be argued that social security is an institutionalised attempt to replicate the sorts of reciprocal values that are typical of many traditional societies. It may also be regarded as an attempt to create a sense of

community where only an eroded sense exists, and to mimic the sorts of caring and obligation that are typical of societies in which relationships and social ties are far more significant than what may be called the cult of the individual.

Notions about social security are typically embedded in broader notions about economic development, the global economy, and fairness and equity. The dominance of ‘market-oriented approaches over other socio-economic models’ (Hoskins, Dobbernack and Kuptsch [eds], 2001, p. 4) brings into focus the values that underpin social security policies from country to country, and in particular the argument about whether or not social security can operate in harmony with and even promote economic growth (Hoskins, Dobbernack and Kuptsch [eds], 2001, pp. 4–5). Social policy analysts and those who work in the social services see generally that the work they do or want to do is circumscribed by those who argue from a market-oriented standpoint. As Hoskins says in his introductory chapter, ‘The lesson is that economic growth and increasing globalization does [sic] not necessarily reduce poverty or increase the social security protection of citizens’ (Hoskins, Dobbernack and Kuptsch [eds], 2001, p. 7).

The International Labour Office (ILO) defines social security as –

... the protection which society provides for its members, through a series of public measures, against the economic and social distress that otherwise would be caused by the stoppage or substantial reduction of earnings ... (ILO, 1984, p. 3)

This definition encapsulates two important features of social security as a system of social protection: firstly, that it involves public intervention by the state; and secondly, that such intervention presumes and is predicated upon the notion that market earnings represent the primary means of protection for the majority of the population.

While this definition may be adequate to describe some countries (and/or societies), it is not adequate to characterise societies where there are steady earning flows, and where ‘the extended family has been the major provider of social protection of its vulnerable members’ (Saunders, 2001, p. 73). While Saunders attributes this partly to the informal economy of the area of his study (South and Southeast Asia), it also ‘has much to do with history and culture and with the values they promote, in particular those concerning notions of responsibility and obligation which evolve in different ways in different societies’ (Saunders, 2001, p. 73).

He argues that most social security policy development reflects a basically Western culture that has developed and evolved since World War II, which in no way accounts for, acknowledges or includes other cultural belief systems and ways of doing things.

The sort of argument Saunders puts forward acknowledges cultural difference and hegemony, and is useful in placing concepts like social security in a broader philosophical and cultural framework.

Margaret Catton’s (1959) account of social services in Hawai’i provides some of the historical background to social security, from organised charity to social philanthropy and the development of state-funded social security.

## **Points of Difference: Pacific People in New Zealand**

This section presents literature on statistical information and research approaches, cultural identity and cultural values as ways to show points of difference and to provide both a

methodological and cultural context for the literature on volunteering and cultural obligation and related themes that follow.

There is statistical information in many publications. It is summarised usefully in Pasikale and George (1995); and in Tamasese et al (2000), pp. 28–30, 58–59.

The cover of the Statistics New Zealand publication, *Pacific progress: a report on the economic status of Pacific people in New Zealand* (2002) states enthusiastically, ‘Over the last decade unemployment among Pacific peoples has more than halved and Pacific people are increasingly likely to be employed in white collar occupations’.

The book goes on to give an account of the Pacific population in New Zealand, with the most recent (at the time) Census-based information. The characteristics and trends noted are that the Pacific population in 2001 numbered 232,000, or 6% of the total population. The Samoan ethnic group was the largest Pacific ethnic group, with 115,000 people in 2001, making up half of the Pacific Islands population. The rest of the population was made up of 52,000 Cook Islands people, 40,700 Tongans, 20,100 Niueans, 7000 Fijians and 6200 Tokelauans, with other smaller populations as well.

Over half (58%) of these people were born in New Zealand. The young and those born in New Zealand were identified as having improved status.

Generally, the Pacific population has a much younger than the rest of the population; for example, in 2001, they had a median age of 21 (cf. 35 for the total population). The median age for Pacific people born in New Zealand was 12 years (cf. 37 for overseas-born Pacific people).

It was found that there were higher numbers of people living in families and extended families, and that the average number in a household was 5.4 people (cf. 3.5 for New Zealand as a whole) (Statistics New Zealand, 2002, p. 2).

A greater proportion of Pacific Island peoples spend time looking after a child in a household (38% cf. 30%) or an ill or disabled household member (12% cf. 7%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2002, p. 3).

Unemployment participation is 61% (cf. 66%), and unemployment is nearly twice as high as the total unemployment rate (11.2% cf. 5.7%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2002, p. 4).

While giving important data on Pacific Island peoples in New Zealand, this publication presents an odd mixture of an overtly external, prescriptive view (witness the cover statement) and an occasional arbitrary, internal, descriptive view (family structure, childcare patterns etc.). No mention is made of remittances, for example; and while the high rates of caring for others are recognised they are not regarded as employment of any sort. The breakdown of income types is linked to age, benefits etc., and does not take cultural factors into account. The mark of ‘success’ is therefore an external (to cultural values) one, based on the numbers in ‘employment’ and, even more so, the numbers in white collar employment.

A report on Pacific people in New Zealand produced by the New Zealand Institute for Economic Research (NZIER) (2003) pays considerable attention to the components of culture that make points of difference – to the importance of kinship ties, remittances, and church as a cultural and social focus, for example. While examining the statistics (‘On average, Pacific people earn about 10% less than Maori, who in turn earn about 20% less than Pakeha’ [NZIER, 2003, Section 3, p. 8]), the study looks within the various Pacific communities for their behaviours and values rather than superimposing economic questions that bear little relevance in these particular contexts. For example, in discussing the role of the church, the report says, ‘In some cases, financial obligations to the churches and to community events both here and back in the Islands have a significant financial impact on Pacific peoples resident in New Zealand’ (NZIER, 2003, p. 12).

Pitt and Macpherson, writing in 1971, recognised that if agencies worked through the church and aiga, they would be more likely to find acceptance and bring about constructive change than when trying to work outside of any meaningful cultural structures and institutions (Pitt and Macpherson, 1971, p. 104).

Tamasese et al in their review of lottery responsiveness to Pacific Islands groups make the point that ‘while in New Zealand, Pacific people have built their own communities and community facilities largely through their own efforts’ (Tamasese et al, 2000, p. 47). Looking from the outside, then, it is clear that within Pacific communities much has been planned, paid for and created that does not get picked up by the external research tools of many Pakeha (and notably government agency) institutions. Tamasese et al (2000) cite McKinlay Douglas’ scoping study of the role of government and voluntary agencies in New Zealand in which the researchers say they have ‘identified a shift in the provision of services from the public sector to the voluntary sector’ [but] ‘in the dominant culture of the contract environment, significant barriers have emerged, not the least of which is the funders’ reluctance to allocate to services or facilities with which they are unfamiliar’ (McKinlay Douglas, 1998, p. 48).

Similar findings were made by the Pacific Islands Consultation and Advisory Group (McKinlay Douglas, 1998, pp. 48–49).

Between March and April 2003, the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs held 10 nationwide consultation fono with 700 Pacific Islands young people aged 13-24 (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2003, pp. 4–5). The aim was to gather together information on identity, leadership and prosperity, and to gain some insight into the issues of Pacific self-identity and cultural preservation, bearing in mind any emerging differences between second-generation Pacific peoples and first-generation. The findings that emerged were salient:

The most negative aspect of Pacific culture that was voiced by Pacific youth was the extensive giving of money to the church and other Pacific events such as funerals and weddings. (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2003, p. 19)

This summative statement sits alongside others in the report – the high sense of Pacific pride, the strength of positive identity as Pacific peoples, and the importance of family and culture (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2003, p. 24).

Some responses from the fono encapsulate the values and world view being expressed:

Social prosperity is more important for PIs as opposed to economic property.  
Prosperity is about having a family, job, being strong in church and being able to do things for youth.  
Prosperity is about happiness. (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2003, p. 30)

While being aware in some instances that the tradition of contributing to family, community and church events could be a ‘major obstacle to any plans for prosperity’, ‘For some, these values determined their concept of prosperity. One person’s definition of prosperity was *‘having enough money for fa’alavelave’* [giving to the church]’ (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2003, p. 31).

Such a study is an exemplification of the assertion made by Tamasese et al (1997, p. 8), that research methods in any study of Pacific Island people must not be Western or biased. In a study of wellness among the Samoan community in New Zealand, the cultural approach is called fa’a faletui methodology (Tamasese et al, 1997, p. 82). It comes from the inside and is not imposed.

In her Masters thesis in Social Sciences (Psychology), Juliet Todd-Oldehaver approaches her topic from the very beginning from the inside, and develops her research methodology from the values and integrity of the culture in which she is working. Because respect and reciprocity are at the core of Samoan culture, she adopts them as the most important ways to construct and carry out her research, and they become the lynchpin of her methodology:

Respect was demonstrated to the participants in practical terms, with polite and courteous behaviour during the research process ... the researcher sought to address reciprocity by prioritising the views, needs, wishes and interests of the participants. This was demonstrated in practical terms ... Special effort was made to encourage participant ownership of data, and to identify means of reciprocation that might be most agreeable and beneficial to participants. (Todd-Oldehaver, 2004, pp. 36–37)

## **Cultural Identity**

All concepts and all words are culturally defined and have cultural meaning (Todd-Oldehaver, 2004, pp. 12–13, *passim*). Concepts which have their provenance in a particular cultural tradition will therefore carry meanings, tags and implications into another cultural setting when they are applied there unreflectively.

A growing number of studies have been carried out in New Zealand that address this problem directly or indirectly: directly, by confronting the cultural discourse involved, and indirectly, by working from within the culture and developing new meanings and methodologies.

In a study of fa'asamoa and social work in New Zealand, Mulitalo-Lauta carefully describes what he calls 'the total make-up of the Samoan culture' (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000, p. 15), including courtesy and diplomacy, respect for elders and parents, understanding of protocols, and the importance of gift-giving and exchange (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000, p. 16). In order to discuss social work practice in the Samoan context, he defines and describes what he calls the five key components of fa'asamoa as being:

- Samoan heart – feelings, attitudes
- Samoan way – food, money, mats, gifts, psychology
- Protocols and values – etiquette, respect
- Social structures and institutions
- Ceremonies and rituals.

Similarly, Tamasese et al's study of Samoan perspectives on mental health identifies the core characteristics and values of the Samoan as the only way to make sense of discussion about health issues and concepts of wellness:

Samoa's traditions and protocols explain the nature of the Samoan being as that of a relational being; that is, the Samoan person does not exist as an individual. (Tamasese et al, 1997, p. 28) To the Samoan, the separation of the physical and spiritual natures is an anathema to well-being. (Tamasese et al, 1997, p. 37)



Todd-Oldehaver's thesis about 'psychological resilience' articulated through the narratives of three Samoan migrants gives an extended and useful summation of fa'asamoa (Todd-Oldehaver, 2004, pp. 14–18), including an account of social structure, identity, the 'Samoan way', and the nature of the Samoan population in New Zealand.

Like several scholars, she focuses on one of the most salient features of Samoan identity, quoting from Tamasese et al (1997, p. 83):

The whole person exists, not as an individual, but in relationship with other people. This being has meaning only in relationship, and derives its sense of wholeness, ... and uniqueness from its place of belonging in its family and village, its genealogy, language, land, environment and culture. (Tamasese et al, 1997, p. 83; quoted in Todd-Oldehaver, 2004, p. 15)

This is extended in Waldegrave et al:

The description of persons or selves in a Samoan context is that the person exists in relationship to other people both living and those who have passed on. ... Samoan descriptions of self are in relation not only to past and future generations and to each other now in the present, but also to the land, the forests and the sea. (Waldegrave et al, 2003, pp. 189–90)

Within the Samoan worldview, great care is taken to ensure that relationships between people, villages, the land and the spirit world remain in good order. When these relationships are disrespected, or crossed in culturally inappropriate ways, there are serious repercussions. (Waldegrave et al, 2003, p. 185)

The articulation of identity is crucial in approaching the concepts at the centre of this literature review, volunteering and cultural obligation. If identity is not appreciated and contextualised, concepts that come from 'outside' will be, at best, uncritically applied and, at worst, inappropriately prescribed, creating a racist patriarchal dynamic (see Waldegrave et al, 2003, p. 156 for further discussion of this).

## Values

The discussion of identity leads to a discussion of values, of the very core of each culture's being, meaning and expression. Values inform all human behaviour and all human relationships. Waldegrave et al (2003) describe what they call 'some significant differences between Pakeha (European) fundamental values and Maori and Pacific Islands values' in the following way:

Communal	/	Individual
Spiritual	/	Secular
Ecological	/	Consumer
Consensual	/	Conflictual.

(Waldegrave et al, 2003, p. 154)

An understanding, first, of values and, second, of cultural differences needs arguably to be at the heart of any research in the social sciences. In her Foreword to Pasikale and George's (1995) contribution of the Pacific Islands component of the Intra Family Income & Resource Allocation Project, Emele Duituturaga writes:

If individualism is the essence of the mainstream culture then 'being part of a family: aiga, anau, magafoa, kaiga, kainga and kawa' is the essence of Pacific Islands cultures. Recognition of the fundamental differences would be a step in the right direction. (Pasikale and George, 1995, p. 7)

The study goes on to examine family income within the context of Pacific Islands families (not the Pakeha nuclear family model), using case studies and focus groups in a culturally appropriate way. The issue of the study is 'whether combined family income could be used as an accurate measure of individual family members' access to the economic resources available to the family' (Pasikale and George, 1995, p. 9); but by defining the family in an appropriate way and by looking at cultural practices and values in relation to income and goods, the study is able to produce culturally-relevant findings. As Duituturaga writes in the Foreword, 'It is not about having your cake and eating it too; it is about economic wellbeing that includes physical, social and spiritual wellness' (Pasikale and George, 1995, p. 7).

In the conclusion to the study, Pasikale and George make the centrality of identity and value clear:

Pakeha New Zealanders may view (from their particular set of cultural glasses) with bewilderment and sometimes horror, the Pacific Islands value of meeting obligations to community and extended family before their immediate personal needs. But as the experiences of the Pacific Islands families in this study show, meeting these cultural imperatives are necessary to fulfilling the Pacific Islands person's sense of place within their cultural group, to both confirm identity and to demonstrate affiliation. (Pasikale and George, 1995, p. 68)

This study has demonstrated that for Pacific Islands families, family income cannot be used as an accurate measure of individual family members' access to the economic resources available in the household. Family and collective need has priority over individual need. (Pasikale and George, 1995, p. 71)

Fleming et al (1997) present a similar view:

In the Maori and Pacific Islands families, emphasis on communal ownership of resources placed priority on giving rather than having money. This gave a different meaning to money control in these families. ... the breadwinner/homemaker model of family economics in Pakeha or Euro-American families should not be extended uncritically to non-Pakeha families. (Fleming et al, 1997, p. 71)

This study also highlights another area of concern: where cross-cultural comparisons are made, and research projects are set up to make these sorts of comparisons, tools developed in one strand of the research may not be entirely appropriate for another. A questionnaire in the

Intra Family Income & Resource Allocation Project that was developed for the Pakeha component had little relevance for the Pacific Island component. While it was adapted for the latter context, the researchers later concluded that it was counterproductive (Pasikale and George, 1995, pp. 19–20).

Several studies, especially in the area of health, identify a key Pacific Islands value as a sense of wellness/wellbeing/harmony. Love et al's (2004) account of Maori contributions to the concept of social wellbeing stresses that wellbeing must be defined culturally. If health research is conducted that does not attempt to find cultural meaning for concepts of 'health', then it can only impose meaning from the outside.

Todd-Oldehaver's (2004) thesis identifies issues of resilience, health and wellbeing, and assesses stressor themes (including geographical and socio-cultural displacement; misunderstandings; communication, intergenerational and marriage conflicts; racial discrimination) and protective factors (including faith in God, involvement in church or community).

By centering her study in Samoan values and identity, and giving recognition to reciprocity, relationship and belonging, she is able to provide a clear and useful assessment and description of 'psychological resilience' that is culturally founded and appropriate.

In their description of Just Therapy, Waldegrave et al write that '... the Samoan person is seen to [be] both physical and spiritual in nature – in fact there is no separation of these concepts. ... mental health ... is not seen as a separate category of health. It is part of the total health and well-being of people, land and sea' (Waldegrave et al, 2003, p. 191).

Mental health is presented as a totally different concept from that in the West: ill health can result from a breakdown of social relationships (see also Todd-Oldehaver, 2004), although this view is likely to be dismissed by Western psychiatrists (Waldegrave et al, 2003, p. 192).

This view and another iteration of the centrality of identity and values in any social science research is presented in Tamasese et al, 1997:

The state of mental wellness for a Samoan person, was identified as a state of relational harmony, where the personal elements of spiritual, mental and physical are in balance, with the mental aspects being closely identified with the spiritual. This self draws its sense of sacredness and uniqueness from a deep sense of belonging to its genealogy, culture, identity, and language. The self seldom draws its sense of worth when it is able to carry out its appropriate roles and responsibilities. ... The self, it was stated, can never exist alone. It always exists in relationship. (Tamasese et al, 1997, pp. 83–84)

Heather Young Leslie's account of Kauvai in Tonga presents the same picture:

[Health is not about physical health but about] the maintenance of harmony in relationships among family and community members, both living and deceased. (Parsons, 1985, p. 90; quoted in Leslie, 1999, pp. 152–3)

Living well, maintaining appropriate social relations, making one's son or daughter into a healthy child – these are heavy duties on Kauvai. (Leslie, 1999, p. 229)

## Ethnocentrism

A significant factor in assessing the literature on volunteering and cultural obligation and associated issues is the amount of ethnocentrism that informs many accounts. When research findings are presented through ethnocentric eyes, the findings immediately lose validity. It is like looking at something through glasses that were prescribed for somebody else with very different eyesight. Although facts and figures may be empirically correct, the interpretation placed on them will inevitably be incomplete or incorrect. Ultimately, ethnocentrism and the judgements that inevitably spring from it are significant reasons why it is so difficult to find literature on volunteering and cultural obligation that is culturally transferable and culturally correct.

When a dominant culture attributes its own cultural values to another culture being studied or positioned for policy-making, there will inevitably be an enormous hiatus between the values imposed and the values inherent in the subject culture. This is not only a matter of ethnocentricity but also a matter of non-contextual ascription, and is likely to breed assumptions, mistakes and misunderstandings and create omissions, false statements and inappropriate conclusions (whether they are 'empirical' research conclusions or policy guidelines).

Carmel Peteru's thesis in (Applied) Social Science Research is based on the premise that –

Research methods which hold intrinsic value-based ideologies especially when applied to non-Western contexts, contribute directly to exclusions. ... Constructs of method should emerge from and reflect the intrinsic source of its participants' needs. (Peteru, 1995, p. 47)

She makes the point that research and research questions must come from within the cultural and conceptual framework (Peteru, 1995, p. 48). The Intra Family Income & Resource Allocation Project for Pacific Islands families in New Zealand applies this point very clearly:

The theme of **For the Family First** was common to all the households and focus groups interviewed. In the context of Pacific Islands cultures, 'family' signified extended family and ethnic community. Collective responsibility for meeting collective needs was the overriding value affecting financial decision-making and management. Money flowed both inward from extended family/community and outward to extended family/community, as well as across generations. (Pasikale and George, 1995, p. 26)

Even in a major study that begins its chapter on Pacific migrants with a quotation that suggests it will attempt a contextual approach (Barringer et al, 1993), it is apparent that the whole tenor of the research is ethnocentric, bound as it is by the requirements and emphases of the US census:

When migrants of today leave their islands for higher education abroad they also leave behind this sense of place and belonging and enter a social context that not only fails to give definition, but also encourages the expression of one's own needs and desires, one's individuality ... In the social context of the islands control is clear, enforced, and external; in the new context control is

unclear, sporadic, and expected to be much more internal than external. The result, not infrequently, is a sense of lost security and realization that a strange, if not confusing world must be confronted. (Workman et al, 1981, p. 5)

The study then proceeds with facts and figures about Pacific Islands immigrants in the US, and states that the absolute number increased by 46% during the decade (Barringer et al, 1993, pp. 268–9). It notes that Pacific Islands peoples adapt better to suburban and rural communities than to large urban ones (Barringer et al, 1993, p. 274); and in the US tend to be youthful and highly mobile (Barringer et al, 1993, p. 277). And while it characterises the Pacific Islands household type in the US, this is only in relation to and comparison with US household type (Barringer et al, 1993, p. 279).

An examination of migration patterns identifies trends and major economic motivations for migration. It is characterised as a ‘safety valve for increased pressure on human and natural resources in the Pacific Islands’ (Barringer et al, 1993, p. 284), with the main motivations being military service, education and employment. While there is some attempt to examine the state of these migrants in American society, this is in terms of the apparent ‘success’ of their adaptation, not in terms of their own values and aspirations. The study asserts that, ‘Many Pacific Islanders have trouble abandoning their traditional societies as they move to American society’ (Barringer et al, 1993, p. 289); but goes on to state that ‘Those Pacific Islander immigrants who do stay must adapt to the marketplace to compete’ (Barringer et al, 1993, p. 300). It links the tendency of Pacific peoples to ‘maintain cultural ties with their sending islands’ (Barringer et al, 1993, p. 300) to their position outside American society, being more likely to be among the unemployed, and to be seekers of jobs rather than of careers. The study does acknowledge that some of those classified as ‘unemployed’ are actually in ‘unpaid employment’, for example, where a young woman is brought from her home island specifically to look after children in her extended family while the parents are in paid employment (Barringer et al, 1993, p. 302).

In the discussion of unemployment figures, there is recognition of cultural differences (‘Islanders pool and redistribute incomes’, [Barringer et al, 1993, p. 302]), and an attempt to place the economic effects of remittances within a cultural context:

If these remittances were to show up in the income and poverty statistics, the economic situation of Samoans would look even worse. The financial loss, however, is often offset by the cultural gain. ... the Pacific Island community continues to look inward for financial and social reinforcement. (Barringer et al, 1993, p. 313)

Although a ‘Pacific Island’ typology is recognised, the implicit comparison is still with the ‘norm’ of white American employment trends: the study concludes in relation to the ongoing provision of data for all groups in American society except Hawai’ians that, as new data become available,

That will also be the time for Pacific Islanders to consider their place in American society, where they have been, and where they are. Pacific Islanders, both individually and collectively, will then have to assess if they want to be part of the traditional-Western continuum. (Barringer et al, 1993, p. 314)

Cultural differences in terminology abound. While ethnocentricity is for students of anthropology a cardinal attitudinal sin, beyond this, beyond the ascription of one culture's values to another, or judgements made about one culture from the viewpoint of another, cultural differences exist on foundational, fundamental and intrinsic levels. These factors may be regarded at the very least as points of difference, and the way any culture is described, researched, studied or summarised will be safe only if it occurs within the context of that culture.

While ethnocentricity is clearly a danger and a dynamic factor in inter-/intra-cultural discourse, the crucial point of view is clearly that of the insider, or at least the insider context. If, for example, government policy in relation to the family ignores cultural differences and understandings about what a family is, its values, the place of family in that society, the nature of relationships within the family, between family members, and between that family and the wider culture, as well as the deepest spiritual, individual and relational values of that culture, then any policy that results will be culturally inappropriate. There can be no 'match' if the policy does not address the quintessential cultural context in which a concept such as family is embedded.

Dewar and Parker (2003), in their presentation of the papers from a world conference on family law, recognise that Western legal principles have been inappropriately superimposed on pre-existing customary law, and that there should not be a similar superimposition of concepts like 'family' which will interfere with the application and efficacy of legal practice and social research in any society.

The issue of cultural integrity was recognised by both the Pakeha and Pacific Islands components of the Intra Family Income Study Project that was completed by the mid-1990s. Fleming and Easting wrote, in their account of the Pakeha component,

Research in income allocation in New Zealand is further complicated by the multi-cultural nature of New Zealand. Maori and Pacific Island families could not be omitted if an accurate picture was to be presented, but if results were to be accurate, these groups had to be researched in their own terms, rather than subsumed into a 'mono-cultural study'. (Fleming and Easting, 1994; quoted in Pasikale and George, 1995, p. 9)

The definition of 'extended family' given in Pasikale and George's study is important:

'Extended family' refers to family members who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption, with common ethnicity, who may, but not necessarily, live in the same dwelling. It is assumed that the extended family has an impact on the dynamics of family income. Obligations within extended family relationships include: individual members contributing to miscellaneous expenses incurred by brothers, sisters and parents; and adult children supporting their parents. It is important to bear in mind, that 'obligations are not enforced commitments, but the importance of family solidarity is constantly stressed, and a number of informal sanctions and pressures can be brought to bear on persons who attempt to avoid their financial responsibility to their kin group'. (Pitt and Macpherson, 1974; Curson, 1979; quoted in Pasikale and George, 1995, p. 13)

The study goes on to quote Joan Metge's definition of the Maori extended family as applicable also to Pacific Islands families:

... a socially recognised group of kin descended from or married to persons descended from a living senior couple or widowed person, living close enough to each other to be able to act together for certain purposes and in fact consistently doing so on an organised basis. (Metge, 1964, p. 66)

The major difference is that 'in Pacific Islands families, if a member/s live significant distances from their extended families, they may still be obliged to contribute to family activities. This includes the practices of remittances and sponsorship of relatives living in parent countries' (Pasikale and George, 1995, p. 14):

Fleming et al's (1997) study of income sharing in New Zealand families makes the point that in Pacific Islands families 'the business of earning an income is a communal activity, the responsibility of all family members' (p. 17).

Terminology and definitions are not the only determinants of the appropriateness of research methods. For example, the study by Pasikale and George (1995) involved Maori, Pakeha and Pacific components and it was deemed important for there to be useful relationships and cross-overs for comparative purposes between the research tools of the three components. Consequently, the Pacific Islands study adopted the questionnaire developed for the Pakeha study and adapted it to the Pacific Islands context (see also Peteru, 1995, pp. 47–48). While this allowed valid comparisons to be made, it also had the effect of imposing a Pakeha cultural view with its own Pakeha connotations onto a Pacific context. The researchers write:

... this approach also limited us getting full data on the issues in Pacific Islands families on the access to family income. For example, the research was designed for Europeans and generally the values of Europeans so that many of the spending categories (for example, paying for hired help, keeping drinks in the house, holidays, and entertainment) were either not applicable or had different connotations for the majority of Pacific Islands families interviewed. (Pasikale and George, 1995, pp. 19–20)

## **The Economic Continuum: From Gift-Giving to Remittances**

One of the main ways by which people attempt to understand human social behaviour, including the forging and maintenance of bonds, and issues of obligation and motivation, is by looking at what may loosely be called their economic interactions. In ethnographic and anthropological terms, these range from trade, barter or commodity exchange; to gift-giving; to remittances; and on to other forms of local, national and global economic behaviour.

In order to understand the feelings, thoughts and motives that underpin social behaviour such as a wish to help others, or a sense of obligation that leads to action, it is helpful to look at economic behaviour along the barter-gift-giving continuum, and the sending of remittances.

## Gift-giving

The literature on gift-giving falls roughly into two types:

- theoretical anthropological studies and analyses of gift-giving;
- ethnographic accounts of gift-giving and related cultural markers and behaviours.

Generally, anthropologists who focus on the phenomenon of gift-giving see it as one type of behaviour along a continuum of human exchange that identifies barter, exchange, gifts, return gifts, pay-backs, debts and obligations.

Mauss (1990) who is usually cited as a major originator of the anthropological study of gift-giving examines gift-giving as a utilitarian form of creating and maintaining social connections. The anthropologist Karen Sykes sums this up: 'Mauss had posed a good question: namely, why do people feel obligated to reciprocate what they have received?' (Sykes, 2005, p. ix). In his summation of Mauss' approach, Godelier says that Mauss postulates that what creates a sense of obligation to give is that giving creates obligations (Godelier, 1999, p. 11).

But in dissecting Mauss' argument, Godelier compounds the utilitarian and functionalist approach:

... the act of giving seems to create simultaneously a twofold relationship between giver and receiver. ... Two opposite movements are thus contained in a single act. The gift decreases the distance between the protagonists because it is a form of sharing, and it increases the social distance between them because one is now indebted to the other. (Godelier, 1999, p. 12)

In this paradigm, people only give in order to receive, and not only that, they give in order to hold the other to ransom. The relationship is asymmetrical and holds no altruism, care or love. As the feminist academic Rauna Kuokkanen writes, 'Mauss's central thesis was that the gift is constituted by three obligations of giving, receiving and paying back ... gift exchange represents a disguise and replacement for a deeper hostility, or alternative to war (Kuokkanen, 2004, p. 84).

This sort of approach has been subject to scrutiny by and challenged from several angles by cultural, feminist and social anthropologists and ethnographers. While still allowing the economic context to stand intact as a valid site of human interaction, and as one of the indicators of how human societies work, Barraud et al assert the human rather than utilitarian characteristics and essence of gift exchange:

How can we understand their exchanges when the substantialist approach most commonly adopted, attentive only to the passage of objects between subjects, turns its back on the very relational logic which we seek to lay bare? ... is there not something more to a relation than objects being transferred between subjects? (Barraud et al, 1994, p. 3)

And Barraud et al quote from Polanyi – 'the outstanding discovery of recent historical and anthropological research is that man's economy, as a rule, is submerged in his social relationships' (Polanyi, 1957, p. 46; quoted in Barraud, et al, 1994, p. 4) – placing gift-giving firmly back in the sphere of heart rather than head, concern for the other rather than selfish pragmatism. When one person gives to another, as Karen Sykes says, 'I remember that I have a relationship with you' (Sykes, 2005, p. 59). She goes on:



The gift cannot be understood as a utilitarian exchange of goods, rather it encompasses the total human experience ... when understood as a total social fact, gift giving concentrates many aspects of human relationships but does not underwrite all of them as economic. (Sykes, 2005, p. 75)

Strathern in her feminist examination of the gift economy in Melanesia analyses different theoretical and ethnographic studies of gift-giving in that area. She presents a rarefied account that suggests gift-giving is an expression of relationship between subjects, between giver and recipient, whereas commodity exchange 'establishes a relationship between the objects exchanged. In a commodity oriented economy, people thus experience their interest in commodities as a desire to appropriate goods; in a gift oriented economy, the desire is to expand social relations' (Strathern, 1988, p. 143).

Another approach is that presented in a collection of essays about barter and exchange edited by Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones, in which they argue in their introductory chapter that barter is seen as something bad, an indication of the baseness of human nature, and something that was only 'cleaned up' and made respectable by the introduction and adoption of money. Barter, like gift-giving, is often regarded in the literature as a primitive form of economics (Humphrey and Hugh-Jones, 1992, p. 5). What they are claiming is that barter is a perfectly workable system of exchange that is contemporary and widespread, and is not part of an economic evolutionary tree that reaches its pinnacle in capitalism. In a chapter of this book, Alfred Gell, writing about barter and gift-exchange in old Melanesia, similarly argues that ceremonial exchange has been presented as the primordial transaction from which all others derive (Gell, 1992, p. 142); instead, he characterises it as a 'transactional mode' (Gell, 1992, p. 143), one in which ongoing relationships are seeded and nurtured. It is this aspect, again the social aspect of human transaction, that emerges as paramount.

The sorts of behaviour manifest in barter, exchange and gift-giving are quintessential expressions of human relationships, whether they are examined pragmatically from an economic point of view or more humanistically from a social anthropological point of view. Since people in absolute isolation are arguably scarcely functional beings, and it is only human society that holds meaning, it is not surprising that some writers should uphold the centrality of the connections between people rather than the things that force them apart. The feminist writer Genevieve Vaughan in her critique of exchange asserts, 'Giving and receiving, rather than the constraint of reciprocity, is what causes bonding' (Vaughan, 2002, p. 55). It is this fact, the fact of human relationship, that makes the ethnographic approaches to gift-giving in some ways more accessible than the mainly analytical and theoretical approaches, since the ethnographic studies always place theory in context, and refer ideas to observable behaviours.

Mike Evans, in his study of the Tongan tradition of gift-giving, relates the practice to a wider global behaviour:

The gift economy is integral to the continuity of traditional social organization and culture, *and* to the participation of households and individuals in the structures and institutions of the modern nation state and global markets. (Evans, 2001, p. 4)

While opting to examine Tongan gift-giving in a global context, he also asserts that 'economic and cultural factors *cannot be separated*' (Evans, 2001, p. 20).

In a similar vein, Jane Fajans in her ethnography of the Baining in PNG, writes, ‘The central concern of the Baining culture is the transformation of natural products (food, babies, etc.) into social products through *work*’ (Fajans, 1997, p. 7).

Once again, the economic function is seen as a way to examine values and motivation within a society. Whereas two previous anthropologists has despaired of finding any sense of coherence or meaning in Baining society (Gregory Bateson said they had broken his heart – Fajans, 1997, p. 3), Fajans was able to identify meaning through her own ethnographic experience and diligence.

Christopher Healey’s study of the Maring in PNG gives a clear account of the differences between trade and gift-giving (see Healey, 1990, pp. 5–12, and Chapter 4, ‘Valuables and prestations’ [gift-giving ceremonies]). While some ethnographers (e.g. Strathern) align the barter and commodity end of transaction with a relationship between people and things, and the gift-giving end with a relationship between people and people, Healey argues that although trade transactions occur only between individuals rather than groups, the people involved nevertheless stand in relation to each other: ‘I argue that in the praxis of trade there is a potential for the expression of a central concern for sociability’ (Healey, 1990, p. 128).

Healey focuses on the evident connectedness between people in all their transactions, and argues, ‘To characterize trade as primarily ‘economic’ in focus and prestations as social, political, or religious in orientation is misleading’ (Healey, 1990, p. 129). He then focuses on, describes and analyses the types of events that occur in Maring society.

In a study of traditional gift-giving among Pacific Islands families in New Zealand, Tumama Cowley et al describe not only the extent and nature of this gift-giving, but also its function and motivation:

One of the features of this Pacific diaspora is the transfer of money, goods, and human resources from expatriate kin to their islands of origin ... The strong cultural and kinship ties and obligations among Pacific peoples remain dynamic and there is a constant flow of money and human resources to and from the Pacific Islands. ... Their place in the world is defined by their interrelatedness and interconnectedness with their aiga and spiritual dimension. (Tumama Cowley, 2004, pp. 432–3)

While the practices described here are what some researchers have called remittances, the emphasis is on the traditional nature of the practice and its alignment with cultural obligation and what Tumama Cowley et al call ‘the rationale of the aiga’ (Tumama Cowley, 2004, p. 433).

Leslie’s (1999) PhD thesis on Kauvai in Tonga enumerates the meaning of gift-giving:

- it establishes personal rank
- social confirmation and marking of gender
- locating individuals within social networks that span generations
- marking ritual status (e.g. mourning, respect)
- demonstrating maternal kainga’s love and investment in children
- fulfilment of culturally prescribed obligations (fai fatongia).

Gifts are an indication of social place and rank, and an expression of reciprocity; they are used to show fulfilment of duty, feelings of love/generosity/empathy/respect and obedience (Leslie, 1999, p. 277). And while most studies concentrate on the quantities of goods, the uses to which they are put and who sends them and when (see next section on Remittances), Leslie's ethnographic concentration on women in Kauvai looks also at the meanings inherent in the sending of goods and this allows us to see into the motivations and obligations involved.

There are many ethnographies that contain discussion of gift-giving and other transactional forms as they occur in different societies. The attempt here is to show the main perspectives and to give some examples.

## **Remittances**

An area of major research in relation to Pacific peoples and economies is the study of remittances. They have a bearing on the discussion of cultural obligation because they are an expression of cultural obligation, although they are very variously regarded and interpreted.

The studies of remittances have been carried out by anthropologists, demographers, development scholars, economists and geographers, all focusing on different aspects of remittances. As Bertram and Watters write in their examination of the MIRAB economies of South Pacific microstates (economies characterised by migration, remittances, aid and bureaucracy), 'In the literature on less developed economies, migration has been discussed extensively' (1985, p. 498); and following from this, the remittance behaviour of migrants is characterised as creating 'an emerging new institution, the 'transnational corporation of kin', allowing kin groups to colonize and exploit economic opportunities across a wide range of economic environments' (p. 499). Bertram and Watters recognise that the nature of this migration is that it does not sever individuals from their kin group of origin.

Like later studies, Bertram and Watters describe 'the flow of remittances from overseas-resident members of island households' in economic developmental terms, as 'a major source both of cash incomes in the village economy, and of import capacity in the balance of payments' (pp. 504–6) of the countries studied (in this case, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu). Bertram and Watters generally regard the MIRAB model as sustainable; and Bedford suggests in his (2000) analysis of Bertram and Watters' work, 'in MIRAB economies, international migration generates remittance flows which fuel internal consumption of imported goods in the islands and raise expectations for higher material living standards' (Bedford, 2000, p. 121).

On the other hand, an Australian, John Connell, was at the same time making a more pessimistic assessment of the role of remittances in Pacific societies (1980, 1990). He felt that remittances create and encourage dependency in that they make people want to spend money on imported goods; he concluded that money sent to people on the islands was not invested in activities that would create or increase employment or wealth. While recognising that 'remittances maintain social ties and operate as insurance premiums for migrants', he goes on to say that 'on the smaller islands of Polynesia and Micronesia remittances have fostered dependence rather than inequality and in Melanesia have fostered inequality rather than dependence, but both trends are ubiquitous' (Connell, 1980, p. iii). The same argument is made by Spoonley (n.d.), p. 8.

John Connell teamed up with the economist Richard Brown and together they continued a prolific examination of Pacific remittances within the neat economic context of supply and demand. Their 1995 study (Connell and Brown, 1995) was based on the postulate

that migration reduces unemployment and remittances contribute to raised living standards. 'The primary motivation for migration in the Pacific, as elsewhere', as Ahlburg, another economist, argues, 'is economic improvement for migrants and their families' (Ahlburg, 1996, p. 9). The concomitant of this is that 'Permanent migration can benefit the home country as long as migrants send home a large flow of remittances' (Ahlburg, 1996, p. 9).

Connell and Brown (1995) also showed that official estimates of the volume of remittances, which had always been based on transactions passing through the banking system, were very inaccurate. In fact, cash and goods were a major part of remittances that had never been counted, making up what Bedford calls 'hidden' foreign exchange flows' (Bedford, 2000, p. 122). (See also Brown, 1995b.)

Brown and Walker (1995) found that remittances accounted for two-thirds of the GDPs of Tonga and Western Samoa, and were therefore of great importance. Formally transferred money remittances made up only 30-50% of total remittances. People also send 'gifts' of household and personal items; pay insurance, schooling, travel and other costs for family members; and send money in other non-detected ways. For these reasons, Brown and Ahlburg (1999) state that 'estimates based on official balance of payments data underestimate actual remittances, and possibly significantly underestimate them'. 'It has been established that in Tonga and Western Samoa, unrecorded migrants' remittances represent anything from 25 to 60 per cent of total remittances ... migrants' remittances are possibly greater than all other sources of foreign exchange combined'. (See also Ahlburg, 1995, on remittances in Tonga; Ahlburg and Brown, 1999, on remittances in the South Pacific.)

Brown and Connell (1993) also carried out a study of remittance in the flea-market of Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga, indicating that the functioning of remittance-dependent economies is more complex than existing economic analysis has suggested, being focused on the passive receipt of cash and consumer items. They likened this particular activity of sending goods for sale in the flea-market to investment and entrepreneurship.

Brown's (1994) study of migrants' remittances focuses on the volume, use and distribution of remittances from the point of view of an economist. Based on work carried out for the International Labour Organisation (see Brown, 1995a), these surveys indicated the high levels of receipt of remittances (e.g. in 1984, 90% of Tongan households were remittance recipients, with remittances constituting 28% of the household income, p. 347). Brown made the point that while it is 'often argued that migrants are motivated to remit purely out of altruistic sentiments towards their families and that they undertake very little in the way of investment' (Brown, 1994, p. 362), migrants can in fact be investment motivated. He isolated three motivational categories for remittance behaviour:

- charitable family support – based on altruism and contractual obligation;
- family support – based on self-interested 'inheritance seeking';
- investment motivated by self-interest with a view to personal asset accumulation and/or provision for retirement (Brown, 1994, p. 363).

The surveys Brown undertook had an acknowledged economic focus. While identifying motivating factors such as altruism, he was also looking for investment and savings behaviour that could be stripped in to the developmental/sustainability mindset of this discipline. In another article published at about the same time (Walker and Brown, 1995), it was acknowledged that while altruism was one motive for the sending of remittances, the

drive to invest was also very strong. Connell and Brown (2005) summarise the rationale for remittances (pp. 17–22).

Ahlburg in his 1991 study of remittances and their impact in Tonga and Western Samoa also focused on the motivation for remittances, whether sending remittances was based on altruism or ‘part of a contractual arrangement between the migrant and his or her family. It is important to determine whether the remittances are repayment for past investment or are based on altruism, because the motivation will influence their expected longevity’ (1991, p. 5). He concluded that the investment motive dominates the altruistic motive. It was this sort of approach that led to the concept of remittance decay, based on evidence that remittances decline the longer migrants are away (Ahlburg, 1991, p. 7). The argument Ahlburg goes on to make is that more migrants should go in order to keep the economy sound.

Poirine, in his (1998) assessment of the MIRAB model, examines the altruism versus self-motivated argument and concludes, ‘some studies have found a positive relationship between recipients’ income and transfer amounts (which contradicts the altruist hypothesis), while other studies have found an inverse relationship (which supports the hypothesis)’. As Poirine says, ‘If altruistic motives were the main determinant, one would probably find a tendency for remittances to fall over time, as links to the home country and family become weaker and weaker (the ‘remittance decay’ hypothesis). In the case of Pacific Island migrants, there is evidence to the contrary’.

Poirine in the same paper provides a rather more balanced view of remittances and their role in Pacific Islands economies and cultures than do some economists. He writes, ‘Economics is a dismal science in more ways than one: for each beautiful altruistic motive admired by an anthropologist, an economist will tend to see a down-to-earth, self-interested motive lurking behind it’.

He gives a good summation of the economic remittance literature, the terminology used and concepts that emerge. His exposé of the judgements made by economists like Connell and Brown is interesting and clear. He quotes from their 1995 study: ‘At the national level, estimates for Tonga suggest that about 70% of remittances were spent on imported consumer goods, including tinned and preserved food, beverages and tobacco’ (Connell and Brown, 1995, p. 21), and then goes on to write, ‘If only remittances were used for productive investment, they would acquire some redeeming social value! Recipients could then be pardoned for their sin ... Unfortunately almost everything is spent on imported goods, requiring apologies to comply with economic orthodoxy’. But for all his good humour, however, Poirine still promotes economic concepts. He does not rely on altruistic motives to explain and examine remittance behaviour, but instead talks about investment, even if he also includes a sort of social investment in this economic model (see also Poirine, 1997). He finally regards remittance as an informal loan arrangement.

In a very recent examination of migrants’ remittances by Brown and Poirine (2005), they opt for what they call an ‘intrafamilial loan arrangement using ‘weak altruism’, a behavior between ‘strong altruism’ and pure self-interest’ (p. 407). It is based on previous research on the modelling of remittances amongst Pacific Islands migrants in Sydney. Brown had earlier (Brown, 1997; Ahlburg and Brown, 1997) been unable to draw satisfactory (to them) conclusions about why ‘a migrant’s propensity to remit was not negatively affected by length of absence from home’ (Brown and Poirine, 2005, p. 407). In other words, it was assumed that a migrant was less likely to remit at all, as much or as often the longer the migrant was away from home. By ascribing the conflicting motives of altruism and self-interest to the migrant, Brown and others had difficulty coming to terms with remittance behaviour. This study therefore presents an alternative view, one which attempts to

encapsulate altruism within self-interest, so that remittances are characterised as ‘private intergenerational transfers between parents and children’, which Brown and Poirine call ‘weak altruism’. Children, they write, ‘from the time they are born until they become adults, contract an informal debt of time, attention, and money with their parents. When they become adult and begin to work, the investment in human capital financed by their parents pays off. Children then pay back their debt providing time, attention, and money to their parents’ (Brown and Poirine, 2005, p. 408). Human relationships are thus defined in terms of inputs and outputs, transactions, and costs and benefits.

The concern with savings and investment – whether those sending remittances were hedging their bets and making some sort of sound investment ‘back home’, and whether the recipients of remittances were investing them wisely – dominated this literature for some time. In Brown and Walker (1995), remittances are seen as a way to support consumption levels and as a major source of loanable funds for investment. While a large number of studies of the Pacific emphasise altruistic or obligational motivations (see Ahlburg, 1991; Macpherson, 1985), Foster (1995) found that Tongan and Samoan migrants’ remittances were responsive to financial incentives in the countries they were sending remittances to.

Most studies suggest that the primary use of remittances has been to buy goods, for consumption purposes. But other uses have also been identified, such as payment of debts and travel costs for new migrants. A lot of money is spent on food, especially imported food; for example, estimates for Tonga suggest that about 70% of remittances were spent on imported consumer goods (Tongamoa, 1987, p. 107). Remittances are also used to buy specific items such as an outboard motor (Gailey, 1992, p. 343), and items ‘that would not otherwise be purchased’ (James, 1991, p. 9). Faeamani’s (1995) study of Tonga identified the fact that remittances constitute 50% of income, raising consumption and welfare levels, and being sent primarily for religious donations, food purchases and housing amenities, with some invested in the small business sector. Connell and Brown (2005) summarise the uses remittances are put to (pp. 30–37).

Brown and Ahlburg (1999), while considering all the uses remittances are put to, emphasise the use of remittances for investment and savings, and examine the impact of remittances on the distribution of income. They argue ‘that Pacific migrants send remittances home for a number of reasons, many of which have an economic foundation ... in particular for asset accumulation and investment in the migrants’ countries of origin’. They therefore consider the development of policies that encourage the sending of remittances and facilitate their use for increased prosperity and investment behaviour.

In a more recent study, Connell and Brown (2005) conclude that ‘Pacific island states have not developed policies [to maximise the benefits from international migration] though opportunities exist to stimulate and direct flows’ (p. viii). While ‘remittance levels would be sensitive to policies affecting relative real interest rates’, there is no suggestion that ‘policies would stimulate more dominant investment or that the migrants or their families would necessarily make the best entrepreneurs’ (p. viii). Connell and Brown conclude that migrants should be encouraged to be ‘more active in domestic capital markets as saver-rentiers’, and that governments ‘must offer savers competitive interest rates in order to accumulate loan funds to invest either in domestic projects or to hold as overseas assets’ (p. viii).

In their studies of remittances, economists like Richard Brown looked also at the implications of what they called ‘remittance decay’ and whether this would result from changes in migration, changes in behaviour and changes in wage levels. Brown’s (1994) study of migrants’ remittances looked for correlations between the length of absence from home and the level of remittances, but found this to be a less significant variable than the migrants’

‘objective function’ (p. 363). (See also Brown, 1998.) The abstract for Brown’s 1996 study of the remittance-decay theory is as follows:

There is concern that Pacific island economies dependent on remittances of migrants will endure foreign exchange shortages and falling living standards as remittance levels fall due to lower migration rates and the belief that migrants’ willingness to remit declines over time. The empirical validity of the remittance-decay hypothesis has never been tested. From survey data on Tongan and Western Samoan migrants in Sydney, the paper estimates remittance functions using multivariate regression analysis. It is found that the remittance-decay hypothesis has no empirical validity and migrants are motivated by factors other than altruistic family support, including asset accumulation and investment back home. (Brown, 1996)

See also Simati and Gibson (2001) for an ethnographic account of the concept of remittance-decay as it applies to the Tuvaluan community in New Zealand.

By focusing on the determinants for remittances, these scholars assumed they could assess the economic impacts of changes in remittance behaviour, since economic behaviour and impact is always their focus. Others who studied motivation from a wider (i.e. non-economic) empirical base asserted that senders were unconcerned about the use of remittances but focused instead on their duty to support kin (see, for example, Vete’s study of Tongans in Auckland, 1995). Similarly, Curson’s (1979) study of remittances and the Cook Islands found that remittances bring spatially separated kinsfolk together into a single socio-economic system (p. 185), and ‘remittances maintain economic interdependency’ (p. 185). Since the 1950s, remittances have become a major resource, part of a ‘much wider system of interaction involving obligation and reciprocity’ (p. 188). Curson’s paper is a clear assessment of the frequency of remittances from Auckland Cook Islands households and a good general account of remittances and migration, with an emphasis on the social impact of remittances.

From a different perspective, Bertram’s (2004) examination of small island economies and their metropolitan patrons asserts that ‘small islands ... converge to the income levels of their patrons, not to each other’ (p. 343). Thus, just as the sending of remittances cements the bonds between kin, those who have migrated and those who have stayed at home, the same practice also cements bonds between the small island economies and the countries to which their migrants go. Bertram writes, ‘During the second half of the 20th century – the era of decolonization – it would appear that small island territories experienced a tradeoff between sovereign nationhood and material welfare’ (p. 353).

While the economic literature has referred to ethnographic studies and those that give ‘an insider’s view’, it basically applies the concepts of Western capitalist economic theory to societies that historically and culturally do not have their provenance in these philosophical traditions and which have evolved and exist in a totally different context. For this reason, it is important to look also at literature that takes a contextual approach (such as the work of Kerry James, 1991, 1993, 1997, 2002; Mike Evans, 2001; Helen Young Leslie, 1999) or an insider’s approach (such as the work of Fuka, 1995; Lee, 2003, 2004; Muliaina, 2001; Pasikale and George, 1995; Tongamoa, 1990; and Vete, 1995).

In her study of Tongan women’s traditional wealth and other contraflows, James (1997) gives a useful summary of the economic literature on remittances and a critique of it. She makes the point that the senders of remittances in her study do not care how the remittances are used as much as the fact that they have fulfilled their cultural obligations. This

is the important social investment, *not* economic productivity (p. 5). In her study, therefore, the economic terms (such as ‘investment’) are used for social meaning. So while economists may argue relentlessly about the uses of remittances and the effects of remittances, and whether they are motivated by altruism or can be revealed to be totally self-interested, in her fieldwork James asserts that the *social investment* of remittances is what is important – the fact that cultural obligations have been met.

James also makes the point that while Connell and Brown name the ‘social uses’ of remittances as the least important use, 79% of Tongan and 63% of Western Samoan households surveyed mentioned them as the *main* use of remittances (James, 1997, p. 6). She therefore labels Connell and Brown as ‘overly Eurocentric and economic’ (p. 6), identifying as they do events such as funerals as attracting remittances but not identifying the sense of belonging, cohesion and obligation that such events encapsulate for both those attending and those remitting. James also asserts that Brown is wrong to present remittances as being sent ‘for’ churches, schools, etc., when her finding is that Tongans send money to family members for their own use, which may be to pay money to churches or schools. But this is not a condition; the remittances are not earmarked. She asserts that Connell and Brown make what she calls ‘an epistemological break ... between cultural, social, and economic functions, which is required by Western forms of inquiry’ (p. 9).

Similarly, Evans found in his study of Tonga that money is sent for general purposes, and the uses to which it is put are less important than the fact that the *sending* and the remittances themselves are a central site for the ‘expression of sociality’ (Evans, 2001, p. 121).

Muliaina (2001), in her study of Fusi in Samoa and remittances from Samoans living in Auckland, found that remittances are comprised of cash and in-kind (including household items, toiletries, cosmetics, clothing etc.). ‘Ninety percent of respondents received cash remittances during the year with wide variation between households’ (p. 24), and 77% of respondents received their remittances from close relatives (p. 25). The reasons for remitting were given overwhelmingly as to do with the strength of family ties (p. 30), but there was evidence that remittances tended to reduce the longer a migrant was away from home (‘65% said they were sending less than during their initial years in New Zealand’, p. 31). Reasons for reduced rates of remittances were given as cost of living, birth of children, death of parents or other close relatives, changed marital status and family reunification (p. 31). At the same time, however, 95% of respondents ‘were emphatic about their wish to continue remitting for the rest of their lives. They saw it as an inseparable part of their identity and in keeping with the teaching of the church’ (p. 32). (See also James, 1993, and Lee, 2003, for discussions of the sending of remittances by second generation migrants.)

Details on the composition, nature, frequency and uses of remittances are given elsewhere (e.g. Curson, 1979; Vete, 1995).

In their study of income allocation within Pacific Islands families in New Zealand, Pasikale and George (1995) found that all migrant participants sent money to family in the islands, and regarded this as expected and obligatory:

Remittances were seen as a means of:

- demonstrating parental/family love and loyalty
- alleviating economic hardship for family still in the islands
- maintaining ties.



Remittances were sent for the following purposes:

- support for parents and other extended family
- payment for education for siblings ...
- funerals
- weddings, and
- travel ...

Remittances could be in the form of:

- cash ... \$200 to \$2,000 per annum
- goods – including food, appliances and furniture items.

Remittances were sent as requested at certain time of the year, for example, birthdays ... Participants reported sending remittances at the most monthly and at the least annually. (Pasikale and George, 1997, p. 44)

Other literature reports on the trader's dilemma in trying to balance profitable business practice with obligations to share wealth with kin (Van der Grijp, 2003; and a review by Klein [1997] of a book on ethnic trading networks).

## **Migration Studies**

The issues of remittances and transfers are addressed in the area of migration studies. Demographers, economists and geographers variously argue that migration which involves push and pull factors, and has consequences both for the migrant's homeland and destination, is both determined and affected by economic motivations and consequences.

It is clear that, globally, the relationship between migrants and their home countries has a huge economic impact: 'If it is calculated that each migrant helps five or six people at home, between 200 and 240 million people around the world depend on the support of friends or family members working abroad' (Petty, 2002, p. 147).

Pitt has argued that 'overseas migration does not usually have an adverse effect on the local economy' (Pitt, 1970, p. 186), whereas Shankman suggests that 'as migration and remittances have become a more integral part of the Western Samoan economy they have helped to aggravate under-development' (Shankman, 1976, p. 86). When people leave their home to work in another country, as temporary or permanent migrants, or under other schemes such as guest-worker schemes (see Macpherson, 1980), they are clearly removing themselves from their original labour market and it can therefore be argued that there will be a consequent reduction in production in their place of origin. But it may also be argued that at least a reasonable proportion of those migrating will be unskilled and unemployed, since those are two of the greatest motivators for migration (Macpherson, 1980, p. 19).

As Macpherson states,

... the presence of guest-workers in New Zealand is ... a response to the labour shortages which New Zealand experienced as a result of slow rates of population growth and manpower losses in World War II. The use of migrant labour was only one of a number of strategies available to New Zealand. (Macpherson, 1980, p. 26)

Since the home countries of these guest-workers had labour surpluses, it may have seemed to be a balanced and rational arrangement to encourage the flow of temporary (or permanent) migrants to move from an area of labour surplus to an area of labour shortage. A parallel can be seen with what may be viewed as the co-opting by various New Zealand governments of Maori values of *awhi* and *aroha* to draw on a surplus of goodwill and community support to fill a shortage of state-led support in the social sector in New Zealand (see Te Momo, 2003).

A major outcome that Bedford (2000) identifies is that what he calls ‘the recent diaspora’ is not motivated by the deficits of famine, war and the forced movement of people (as in the past and in other parts of the world), but has resulted in the creation of a transnational society characterised by economic relationships at the family level (Bedford, 2000, p. 111; see also Spoonley, n.d., for more discussion of transnationalism). This fact is made more salient by the fact that bigger populations of Cook Islands people and Niueans live in New Zealand than on their home islands, and there are as many Samoans in New Zealand, Australia and the US as in Samoa. The figures for Tonga are almost the same (Bedford, 2000, p. 111). These migrations have thus created strong linkages between the island nations and their rim-based communities (Bedford, 2000, p. 115); linkages which carry, contain and sustain the values and beliefs of the home cultures and societies.

In a study examining the attitudes of Samoan migrants to their home, Macpherson writes:

There is ample evidence among Samoans in New Zealand of continuing commitment to and identification with families and villages of origin in Western Samoa. This continuous community is usually interpreted as a form of sociopolitical investment that is appropriate for this planning ultimately to return, since by this strategy the rights of an individual to participate in both family and village affairs remain protected. (Macpherson, 1985, p. 242)

(See also Macpherson, 1992, for more up-to-date details on rates of unemployment, income and remittances for Samoan migrants in New Zealand.)

It is the relationship between migrants and their homelands that is crucial, and the expression of this relationship in money, time and energy (Macpherson, 1985, p. 262) that makes the literature on migration of relevance to the concepts of volunteering and cultural obligation.

### **The Cultural Meaning of Money**

In the economic discussion of remittances, there is generally a preoccupation with money as a means of power, status and control. Money is seen as a way to measure success, and the lack of it as a way to measure failure. When money is sent (in the form of remittances) from family members to other family members back home, it is seen as a transfer of goods and wealth, and therefore a deficit for the sender and an asset for the recipient.

If, however, money has a different meaning from this Western capitalist notion, then such ascriptions will be alien to the cultural context being discussed and will therefore negate any ascribed interpretation or meaning.

Pasikale and George (1995) make the point repeatedly and clearly in their summary of their project results:

- Pacific Islands people's concept of money is different from that of Europeans in that money is a means for meeting family and/or community needs, not a means of control. For Pacific Islands people, money has no association with the exercise of power and authority within the family. In households where those who are not the household heads contributed to the family income, family finances were managed by consensus.
- Money does not equal status. The possession of money by individuals does not give them more status. This contrasts with the Pakeha study, where it was found that women's control of family money increased with their earnings. The status of women in the household did not appear to be affected by whether they were in employment or not. Having money meant having the ability to contribute more to family and/or community. Status was gained from seniority, community/church roles and/or family social standing in the community.
- Reciprocity flows across generations. Parents expect to provide for their own offspring as well as their own parents, cousins, nieces and nephews, and any other members of their extended family. Conversely, grandparents are expected to care for grandchildren; and earning children are expected to meet their own needs as well as contribute to nuclear and extended family commitments.
- Adult children, especially those with an income, contribute to the family's economic resources, whether they live at home or not and regardless of marital status and their own family commitments. Older children not living within the households studied, still gave money to parents/household heads, either on a one-off-as requested basis or regularly, for family activities.
- Obligation to family and community often takes priority over personal/family needs. Community commitments were a major consideration in family expenditure. Such commitments included:
  - Contribution to community fund raising activities (for the church and cultural groups)
  - Contribution to extended family activities such as weddings and funerals (either providing food, labour and/or money), and support of extended family members (which includes remittances overseas, care of dependent parents or other relations, and paying travel costs to send someone overseas to the islands or bringing someone from the islands).
- Inadequate income leads to a lack of surplus. Because income levels for an overwhelming majority of the families were well below the average New Zealand family income, adequacy was a key issue in this study. This creates a tension between 'making ends meet' and meeting cultural imperatives. (pp. 25–26)

## **Implications for Policy**

The tension between the concepts of volunteering and cultural obligation is clear in the various meanings attributed to the concepts and the cultural markers inherent in these meanings. The concepts are useful only if they are contextually defined and do not have meaning superimposed from one historical or philosophical tradition onto another. Because

volunteering is one type of activity that is quantified in the New Zealand Census data, and because it is part of what various scholars call ‘civic society’, attracting as it does a certain amount of funding and support from central and local government and from NGOs, there are implications for policy-making in its use and definition in New Zealand society.

The activities included in volunteering are described in the DIA report (2001) as broadly based (involving emergency services, social services, human rights, education, sports, community development and health – and, more specifically, sports coaching, civil defence, fire and rescue services, pre-school programmes, care of the sick and those with disabilities, women’s refuges, marae activities, overseas development, cultural activities and citizens’ advice, amongst others). There are 60,000 voluntary organisations in New Zealand, with 1.1 million people doing voluntary work. In the 1996 Census, it was found that during a 4-week period, 41% of adults undertook paid work, e.g. in sports (see DIA, 2001, p. 6 for further details). It was also found that Maori participation in unpaid work is proportionally higher than non-Maori participation (DIA, 2001, p. 7).

*He waka kotuia* asserts that the data on volunteering are not easily captured because of the tools used to ascertain who does this work, and what it involves (Report, 2002, p. 35). This point is specifically relevant to Maori people, and also to Pacific people. The document *Volunteering and Pacific peoples* states:

9. Pacific peoples would be concerned if government used one generic definition of volunteering in government policy, if it conceptually excluded the cultural equivalent of volunteering undertaken by Pacific peoples. This would risk excluding Pacific peoples from government support for volunteering. (MSD, 2002a, p. 1)

The same document identified examples of how Pacific people see their own formal and informal voluntary and unpaid work:

10. Formal activities are when Pacific peoples:
  - are engaged, without remuneration, for a government-driven initiative, such as capacity building exercises between government agencies and Pacific communities
  - serve on an unpaid basis on trust boards, or governance or constitutional boards for organisations
  - carry out unpaid activities on behalf of a community group or community driven initiativeInformal activities are when Pacific people:
  - assist one another on an unpaid basis, arranging community and extended family gatherings
  - provide unpaid care-taking roles for groups of youth or older people from the community, such as providing transport to attend meetings, or domestic related activities
  - provide unpaid mentoring support and capacity work for Pacific groups. (MSD, 2002a, p. 1)

They are aware that much work is invisible and unrecognised, especially that of older people (points 28 and 29).

Beyond this, they have concerns about how legislation (on taxation, ACC, health and safety, liability and social security) impacts on volunteering and unpaid workers. The document also states:

25. There is very limited data or statistics on Pacific volunteering. Pacific people would like government to gather data on the volunteering and unpaid work of Pacific people and how this contributes to the economy. Over time, this would also provide information about trends in Pacific volunteering and unpaid work.
26. Information from this data could also be published annually in order to raise the profile of Pacific volunteering. (MSD, 2002a, p. 2)

Crocombe's (1990) description of voluntary service in the Cook Islands is representative of the sort of voluntary work identified in other Pacific countries. It involves churches; sports; youth activities; cultural activities and groups; women; education; health, welfare and disaster relief; economic activity involving growers, producers and retailers; professional associations including trade unions and political parties; and international NGOs such as Rotary.

Crocombe says that in a population under 16,500, there are more than 220 voluntary organisations and NGOs (Crocombe, 1990, p. 1), involving more women than men (p. 52). At the same time, he refers to huge fundraising efforts that are made outside these organisations but within the sphere of cultural obligation (pp. 58–60).

Statistics which more accurately portray the nonprofit or voluntary sector are an important tool for policy development per se, and for economic assessments which contribute to policy development. An application of this was the 1976 Census of Private Non-Profit Making Institutions in Fiji which 'was designed to assess the contribution of the sector to the gross domestic product' (Bureau of Statistics, 2002, 1981, p. 7). It went on to elaborate this aim: 'Social and Related Community Services activities account for a substantial proportion of the total economic activity ... needed for preparation of national accounts so that a meaningful study of the whole economy can be made' (1981, p. 8).

Pollard's study of women in the Solomon Islands indicates the enormous variety and amount of work women do:

As for community work ... 'work undertaken at the community level, around the allocation, provisioning and managing of items of collective consumption' [defined by Moser, 1993, p. 34]. Waisisi women say that they often outnumber men in such activities. These include cleaning church and village, church construction, church union work, feast preparation, leading the morning and evening worship and maintaining the Kopo Primary School. (Pollard, 2000, p. 33)

At the same time, 96.2% of them were classified as officially unemployed (Pollard, 2000, pp. 10–11). The participation of Pacific women in community-focused work is not confined to those living in Pacific Islands, but features in the lives of many Pacific women in New Zealand, too. (For example, see Morgan, 2001, for an account of Cook Islands women's activities in New Zealand, especially the stories of Rangī Oberg and Mama Aere Cuthers.)

Fleming et al (1997) describe the high employment rates of Pacific Islands women, who have traditionally always been involved in food production and child-care, and who have also moved into the cash economy.

The misidentification and/or overlooking of women's unpaid work are important factors for New Zealand policy-makers to consider also. If the vast proportion of a particular demographic is described in census data as unemployed while they are in fact heavily involved in work that is not recognised as such by the cultural tags of census questions, their contribution to civic society and participation in that society (especially if it is not their original society) will be skewed and misrepresented. Such misrepresentation can only be to their detriment.

More generally, the distribution and use of money in households needs to be assessed culturally. Fleming et al (1997) make the point that –

Pacific Island and Maori couples give priority to the needs of their extended family, whanau and community, and often have to balance the needs of their household against their wider obligations. ... policy changes in different areas impact on families, and ... different priorities operate as families cope with the effects of change. ... A more co-ordinated approach to policy development might help alleviate the multiple impact of policy changes on families. (Fleming et al, 1997, p. 159)

The document 'Strengthening the community sector' (from *He waka kotuia*) makes the point that there is a need to strengthen Maori and Pacific people's ownership of their organisations, and that policy recommendations need to be culturally appropriate (Report, 2002, pp. 24–27). When policy-makers work in partnership with the organisations they make policies for, all things are possible. The report on the pilot stage of the Samoan Stop Abuse Programme (see Samoan Advisory Council, n.d.) is a case in point.

## **PART THREE: THE SIX PROJECTS OF PRIDE: CASE STUDIES**

<b>Tokelau</b>	Mataualala Hall, Porirua
<b>Fiji</b>	The Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust
<b>Niue</b>	The Contribution of Niue to New Zealand in World War I
<b>Tonga</b>	The <i>Siu Ki Moana</i> National Library Exhibition
<b>Cook Islands</b>	The Atiu Enea Project
<b>Samoa</b>	The So'o Project

# ATAFU HE MATAUALA - A TOKELAU PROJECT OF PRIDE

*Tioni Vulu and Paula Faiva*

## **Acknowledgements**

I need to begin by acknowledging many people. First I would like to acknowledge the whole Matauala community group, those whom I have named and those I have not named — and I wish to include all of those over the years who have been moved by the spirit of Atafu, the spirit of Tokelau and those of you who have given freely of your time, your resources and made many sacrifices over the years. We can all understand the costs to families and how our children have contributed over the years to the building of Matauala. At this time, it is important for you to know that we deeply appreciate the labour of love that Matauala represents as a great achievement for all Tokelauans both here in the Wellington region, and for those of our families who come to visit us here.

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My own hope and motivation is that this story of Matauala will help many to understand Tokelauans and in particular to increase an appreciation of Matauala and the community of families whose vision and lives have contributed to building and sustaining Matauala.

Fakafetai, Fakafetai lahi lele.

Tioni Vulu  
Lower Hutt

## **Introduction**

*Tui Tokelau e fanake la ki to lagi, he tai manuia he tai tagata he tai, fanaifo la ki to moana he tai atu he tai paala he tai kakahi he tai fonu he tai. Fanake ki to Uluulu he tai ulafi he tai ume he tai pone he tai. Fanake la ki to namo he tai tifa he tai figota he tai fahua. Fanake la ki to ulu fenua he tai taume he tai higano he tai kamakama he tai tupa he tai*



The above traditional prayer to Tui Tokelau the supreme god seeks his blessing for the task we are about to undertake.

*Havili mai Havili mai Havili mai.*

*O kae fakalauefa, O kae fakalauefa*

*Tau ki muli, tau ki muli, fakafetai te alofa*

Incantations to the wind to assist with the journey of the canoe.

*Tulou te Uluhina ma outou Ha.*

*Tulou Ki Vanuto ma ona takelega, te lulu o Lafuniu I Olohega.*

*Heavea mua ia Aliko e tupuna mai ia Kava ma Higano. E fakatulou atu ki malae o*

*Fakafotu ma te malu o Tui Tokelau te Fale Agafulu te na o Fakaofu*

*E fakatulou atu ki te Gafa Lua ma ona Kaiga Aliko Ha Talafau, Ha Letele, Ha Tupagai ma Ha Lua. Tulou ki malae o Talikilagi I Nukunonu.*

*Heavea fakapito mua te Falefitu o Atafu aua e fakapitoa na fakamaumauga ie nei ki ni galuega e a au tama fanau.*

*Tulou ki na Vaka Atua ma o koutou tofi mai te lagi aua e molia e koutou te kupu tapu a te Atua ki tagata Tokelau.*

*Tulou, Tulou, Tulou*

### **Atafu He Matauala**

The name of this project of pride case study is **Matauala** which, when expressed in its fullness, is **Atafu he Matauala**. The word matau describes a type of fish hook that is both sharp and adept at catching fish. The word ala means being alert and ready, suggesting that the people of Atafu have these qualities.

The matau is also defined as the shape of the motu or islet<sup>2</sup> within which Atafu village is nestled.

### **Contextual Background**

Tokelau as it is known today is comprised of three groups of atolls located approximately midway between Hawai'i and New Zealand in the South Pacific Ocean and about 500 kilometers north of Samoa. The three northernmost islands are part of New Zealand as a non-

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<sup>2</sup> An islet is a small island.

self-governing territory. The Tokelauan peoples enjoy the full rights of New Zealand citizenship.

The three atoll groups of Atafu, Nukunonu and Fakaofu make up Tokelau. For the Tokelauan people, there is a fourth atoll group – Olohega – which is historically and culturally part of the Tokelau atoll group. However, Olohega (formerly known as Swains Island) is still currently administered by American Samoa for the United States of America.

The Atafu atoll group surrounds a lagoon which is about 100 metres wide and no more than 5 metres above sea level.



*Satellite image of Atafu*<sup>3</sup>

The total population of the three Tokelau atolls is 1500<sup>4</sup> people, with 600 people in Atafu, 550 in Fakaofu and 450 in Nukunonu. In 2004, there were 6,204 Tokelauans living in New Zealand, which comprises 80.5% of the total Tokelauan population. The largest concentrations of Tokelauan people live in Porirua (33%) and Lower Hutt (15%).<sup>5</sup>

Tokelau has its own language although there are linguistic, cultural and genealogical connections with Samoa over the last 200 years created by the history of migration between the Tokelau Islands and Samoa. There are also strong cultural, linguistic and genealogical links between Tokelau and Tuvalu.

### **Genealogical Origins of Atafu**

The people of Atafu are descendants from the seven children of Tonuia. The first settler, a chief from Fakaofu, married a Nukunonu woman named Lagimaina and had six children. When Lagimaina passed away, Tonuia married another Nukunonu woman named Matua who produced one further son. Tonuia had five boys and two girls from these two unions, and in the formal Tokelau speeches Atafu is referred to as Falefitu – meaning seven houses. Each of the houses represents and is genealogically descended from each of Tonuia's seven children.

In Tokelauan metaphorical imagery, the concept of the Tokelau village is similar to what is known in Tokelau as the behaviour of the bait fish, O. The O defends itself by joining with other bait fish and forming into a swirling cylindrical shape which stretches from the ocean's surface down into the depths when bonito (predatory mackerel) are feeding. The O looks like a much bigger mass and therefore more fearsome to the predator.

<sup>3</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atafu> – image source.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics New Zealand, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.stats.govt.nz/cmsapp/templates/system/migration>.

This swirling O phenomenon is known in Tokelau as the O Tu. When the bonito and other predators are feeding on this bait fish, they will not directly attack the O Tu because of its appearance. If any fish separates from the swirling mass of O Tu, they are most likely to be eaten by bonito and larger fish.

In Tokelauan terms, to be a member of the village is to be a part of the O Tu, and to be separated from the village is to put yourself at the mercy of the environment, the elements and predators. Young people are taught as they are growing up in Tokelau that together they are strong, and that the community as a united whole takes precedence over individuals. Tokelauan villages continue to operate in much the same way today.

## **Leadership and Governance**

### *Taupulega, Aumaga and Fatupaepae*

The day-to-day leadership of the villages is organised by the Council of Elders, the Taupulega. There are two other major groups in the village – the Aumaga, which is the men's group, and the Fatupaepae, which is the women's group.

The day-to-day activities of the village residents are organised on a communal basis by the Council of Elders and the leaders of the Aumaga and the Fatupaepae. In the past, the kinds of work carried out were organised around communal subsistence activities such as planting and harvesting, or fishing. Today, there are new forms of work including the work of teachers and public servants who have their own individual jobs to perform.

### *Public Service*

Tokelau has a unique public service. The public service is directly accountable through its relationship with the village to the local Taupulega. The Taupulega is the body that has the overall authority to organise and prioritise the village's needs, whether it is running the health service, the schools, public works or any other paid government work.

The sorts of work undertaken by village projects today include the building of seawalls, housing projects, the installation of water catchment tanks, church building, keeping the village clean and tidy, recycling rubbish and ensuring a pristine environment.

### *Village Households*

Village households are often multi-generational and may be composed of parents, grandparents, aunts, other adult siblings and children. There is a communal approach in raising the children and young people which allows for them to be consistently supervised and cared for. Children grow up with the understanding that when they are not at home, for example, when they are out playing, there will be an adult supervising them.

*'In the village your relations and members of your village will share in the care of your kids just as you are expected to do for theirs.'*

### *Communally Managed Land and Sea Resources*

There is a small area of communally-owned land in Tokelau and the rest of the land in Tokelau is 'owned' by families. While families may hold genealogical connections to specific areas of land, they are not free to utilise their land independently of others.

In order to manage the limited land resources for the benefit of all, the Council of Elders or Taupulega makes the main decisions on the choice of what is grown and harvested.

The Taupulega decides communally what part of the outer island is to be harvested, what fishing grounds are to be opened for the day and even the amount of natural materials for weaving that are taken from the land.

This Tokelauan way of managing resources ensures that exploitation of resources is minimised and resources are protected for future availability. Responsible marine and land resource management is carried out with care to ensure that sea stocks are not depleted and land is managed to sustain the needs of the whole population.

#### *Communal Distribution System*

Tokelau has a system for distributing and sharing its resources, whether that is sharing the catch of the day, the harvest from the communal lands or goods such as flour. This system is called te inati. The call goes out in the village:

‘Tamaiti omamai kina inati’, meaning, ‘Children, come and fetch your family’s share of the harvest’.

Every member of each household is counted and is given an equal share from the common goods being distributed. Distribution quantities are decided by the numbers in each household.

#### *Tifa Tokelau*

One of the treasures of Tokelau is the tifa. The tifa is a treasure from the ocean that is much admired and valued in Tokelau. It is the shimmering Mother of Pearl shell. Fishermen when they come across the tifa often say the tifa, when seen under the sea, lights up the area surrounding it. The tifa is then revealed in its fullest expression when it is cut into several pa or fishing lures, each one of which is lovingly designed, cut, crafted and shaped individually:

*‘Every single pa is unique, but you know when you describe the pa, which tifa it comes from.’*

Each pa is dressed in its own plumage and then strong fishing lines are attached. The pa is then ready to catch bonito for the village.

The tifa is a metaphor for Tokelau family life. Within families, there is scope for individual growth and space for developing individual skills in accordance with talents. When united, like the tifa, the family group is strong, but it is not until the individual members of the family and the help their talents contribute to the family are acknowledged that the treasure of the pa is fully revealed. Each tifa shell can yield several pa:

*‘The self becomes subdued and yet the collective family show the benefit of your skills. No individual in Tokelau will tell you that they would do things for themselves. Anybody who grew up in that environment in Tokelau knows what a joy it is to live in a communal way.’*

Pride in family achievements is a primary motivator for people of Tokelau. Pride is inspired by family achievements, whether in educational success, the achievement of particular skills, providing the best service, showing talent or artistic ability, or having medical or teaching skills.

*‘Pride comes because you are a reflection of your family and as a consequence of that the benefits flow to your village and your race.’*

## The New Zealand Connection

### *The Early Years*

It is out of this collective, land-and-sea-based, genealogically connected and relational context that people came from Atafu, Fakaofu and Nukunonu to New Zealand. The two environments could not be more different from each other.

In Tokelau there are no cars,<sup>6</sup> there is electricity and water catchment by each household and everything needed to sustain life is available. The land and sea resources are carefully managed in order to serve the needs of the entire population. Everybody is included and nobody is left hungry. There is scope for the individual to develop and to practise skills so that the collective family benefits from the skills of its members. From this 'home' environment of protected and managed resources, Atafu settlers came to Wellington. They left an environment that gave close support and nourishment to spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing.

Some of the earliest Tokelauan settlers arrived in New Zealand in the 1960s. Some came to Wellington and as a consequence of that many more Tokelauan settlers followed, seeking out the spiritual, cultural, emotional, economic and physical supports of being near family members.

Other early settlers found homes in warmer places like Auckland, Taupo, Rotorua and Te Puke, but to be with their relatives many moved to the colder climate of Wellington. The early settlers found accommodation in the hostels and cheaper flats that were available at the time around Te Aro Valley and the suburb of Newtown.

During this time, the economic climate was healthy and employment was easily secured and making ends meet was possible. The most difficult aspect of life in New Zealand was missing home and family in Atafu. Many of the early settlers who were single and young started gathering together in groups that created 'the familiar' based on their villages and to transplant this to life in Wellington.

Elders tell many moving stories of their experiences of learning to adjust to the New Zealand context and the amusing experiences caused by limited English language skills. For example, one member of the matauala faafaletui focus group spoke of how he learned to catch buses:

*'I didn't know what to say to the bus driver, but I knew that there were palagi<sup>7</sup> on board who could speak English. So I picked a place in the queue where I could hear and follow them. I hopped on the bus. If the palagi happened to say 'One section, two section or three section' ... I would repeat that.*

*'I never knew whether it was enough to take me to where I was going but that's the only English I could manage. So many times I was well short of where I had to go ... but I followed the palagi and got off the bus in 'One section or two sections or three sections' and I walked the rest of the way ...'*

In this urbanised, individualistic, competitive context, things like learning about supermarkets and their locations was new too. The elders told stories about not knowing how to get to supermarkets to buy food in the central city area. The solution at the time was to shop at the corner dairy if there was one close by. However, for others, local fish and chip

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<sup>6</sup> However, each atoll has one truck to enable deliveries from the wharf to atoll residents.

<sup>7</sup> European New Zealanders.

shops were more accessible. Sometimes, though, the fish and chips had to be bought on the way home from work and by the time workers got home over an hour later their dinner of fish and chips was cold! The diet in the first few months was a bit odd, but elders remembered it was filling and at least fish was a familiar favourite.

Young workers and families learned that accommodation was cheaper in the Porirua basin and that employment was available there. This motivated many Tokelauans to move from central Wellington suburbs to Porirua.

### *Tokelau Resettlement Scheme*<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, the New Zealand government instituted the Tokelau Resettlement Scheme where Tokelauan people and families were resettled in New Zealand between 1966 and 1976. In 1966, the New Zealand government was concerned that Tokelau's population of 1,900 was too high and was growing too quickly for the small islands to sustain it, so assisted passage to New Zealand was widened to include Tokelauan family groups. A tropical cyclone that swept through Tokelau causing serious damage to crops also acted as an additional catalyst for migration to New Zealand in 1966.

When the Tokelau Resettlement Scheme was suspended in 1976, 528 people had been resettled. However, just as many Tokelauan people had come to New Zealand independently without any government assistance.

Under the Resettlement Scheme, settlers were required to work to repay their 'resettlement grants' to the New Zealand government over a two-year period. Tokelauan women (mainly single) were employed by hospitals as 'live-in domestics', while Tokelauan men worked in the timber industry in the central North Island. After several years, many Tokelauans moved from other locations to the Hutt Valley and Porirua city to join the growing Tokelauan community.

## **Vision and Motivations for the Matauala Project**



Photo: Loudeen Parsons

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.teara.govt.nz/NewZealanders/NewZealandPeoples/Tokelauans/1/en>

*'Tui e, te ata kua kakau, e laga kita ko te fanau, Te au o matua ko te fanau'*

Tui Tokelau, the Supreme God is being evoked and being called upon,  
The predawn light is swimming across the ocean  
and I must rise for the sake of my children.

*'Te au matua ko te fanau'*

The au is the organ, in the Tokelau sense, where generosity and love dwell. As parents, the love that comes from this organ – the au – is for their children. The elder generation always feels this love for the children, and it was their concern for the future of the Tokelauan children in New Zealand that motivated them at the beginning of the Matauala project.

When the Tokelauan groups of Atafu gathered, they hired and used facilities that belonged to other organisations. After the Atafu meetings, there would be food to share and social activities. Gatherings were a time when Tokelauan cultural dancing and singing could be performed because they wanted to keep this knowledge and spirit alive. However, the hard reality hit repeatedly when the palagi caretaker arrived saying, 'Sorry, your time is up, there's another booking. I have to lock the hall'. These experiences increased the determination and motivation of the Tokelauans to create their own centre.

Another motivating factor was the need to have a place where they could be free to be with their family, to be with the people they were familiar with from the same island groupings. They looked to create 'the familiar' in the urban context of Porirua. The Tokelauan family community wanted a place that belonged to them, a place where they could honour the elders, honour parents and serve their community. They wanted a place where they could take pride in their ability to provide services to their own community.

These multiple needs inspired the concept – Matauala – a centre they could call their own. The community grew in confidence about financing such a project and, after all, there was sufficient employment at the time in New Zealand.

In 1979, the community bought land in Porirua. The chosen site was on top of a hill overlooking the Porirua basin, well away from houses and away from the urban centre of Porirua. The Falepa, a Tokelauan meeting house, was the model for the building structure.

During this initial period, family groups that were representative of the three atolls worked together. However, differences in religious affiliations arose and contributed to the Atafu group separating from the other two atoll groups at an early stage of the project. The Atafu people realised it was better to unify those who were committed to the Matauala project and so, rather than being slowed by differences, they chose to focus on the Matauala project as a rallying point.

This separation did not mean a breaking of relationships with one another. The other island groups of Tokelau still came to give their support for the project. Many were drawn to continue their support because of their own cultural and familial obligations, and to contribute to the fundraising for the Matauala project as it unfolded:

*'Every Tokelauan has a blood line into the other two island groups from Nukunonu and Fakaofu and the families helped to get it up off the ground ... they too understood the need to have something.'*

After many meetings, expressions of good will and the elders giving their blessings, the right time arrived. By helping, the parents also gave their blessings. The young people

were eager to get a new focus for their lives. The Matauala construction and building project began.

The Atafu ethos and culture was the model for this project and guided the achievement of the goal through a communal approach. The elders of the Matauala project recalled their vision at that time being to build a place that enabled:

*'A holistic approach to the needs of the whole family, the young and the elderly'*

*'a home away from home'*

*'being with each other so we can practice things in Tokelau'*

*'having a meeting place for Tokelauan [people and communities]'*

*'The celebration of weddings, funerals and a place where the children of the future can learn the culture and the language, where the faka Tokelau will be nourished and given a chance to grow, where the elders are honoured and returned to their rightful place'*

*'Mythology, dancing, all sorts of Tokelauan performing arts to be performed and taught'*

*'Genealogy to be remembered and enacted'*

*'Pre-school and adult educational programmes to be held'.*

### **Financing the Matauala Project**

The economic situation in New Zealand was robust in the 1970s. Pacific families were able to meet many of their needs and to contribute funds for the building project. Keen to complete the building sooner, the Atafu families decided to increase the level of their contributions and so some took on additional work to supplement their contributions. Others worked two or more jobs to bring in the additional financial contributions.

Then the 1980s arrived, a time of economic reform that caused increasing levels of unemployment and pushed many Pacific peoples onto unemployment benefits for the first time. Tokelauan families began to be affected by manufacturing sector closures in and around Porirua and then experienced social welfare benefit cuts.

But planning was well underway, and making adjustments to the financing of the project was not an option. This period is remembered by the project members as a particularly brutal time for families trying to survive on their shrinking incomes. For the Atafu project families, like many Tokelauan families, their strong sense of responsibility and obligation to the community and the churches was put into direct competition with the needs of their families. Their lafoga or commitments of contributions to the community and the churches were not a matter of choice. The elders acknowledged that at this time more than any other the needs of their families became a secondary priority.

### **Tuia Te Po Ke Ao**

In Tokelau, it is well known that when out fishing for the night, the time just before dawn was when fishermen became very tired and a call would be made by the master fisherman to the crew:

*Tuia te po ke ao*

Work through the night till dawn till sunrise,  
The children are waiting for their catch.



This was the catch cry, the spirit that drove the project during this especially difficult time.

During the Faafaletui focus group of the Matauala elders, they remembered names of the people who were prominent in driving the project, such as Hila and Tahī, Tateo and Legalo, Logo and Neta, Ahomua and Pupaia, Teliu and Hulia, Lua and Miliga, Tulano and Lola, Okehene and Leutu, and Teaku and Vaalele.

### **Contributions to Construction**

The building site was blessed and building began in 1982. The Atafu people prepared the site themselves, clearing trees and shrubs and creating even ground before the building started.

There were many active contributors to and leaders of the project over the years, and some have now passed away. All of the elders spoke of the challenges during this project. Their commitment meant they made many sacrifices to raise the funds themselves. Many people were consistently involved over the years, giving freely to achieve the Matauala Falepa.

For example, fruit picking became a regular activity for the Matauala family community. Families would gather together and drive north to Otaki on Saturdays to pick fruit for Otaki orchardists. Their wages for the day's labour would be contributed to the building funds for the project. It was a solution the elders developed in order to ease the financial burden on families, allowing them to meet both their family and contribution commitments to the Matauala building fund. The mortgage payments for the entire project were met through continuous fundraising by the Matauala families.

The Matauala elders managed, negotiated and contracted with engineers, carpenters and builders, electricians, plumbers and planners who were all contracted at the usual market rates to complete the initial structure and internal rooms. All the other kinds of finishing work and labour were carried out by the Matauala families on a voluntary basis.

The second stage of the Matauala building design included conference facilities and rooms that were suitable for families to use during funerals, allowing families to gather in privacy in one room where the casket could lay, while nearby in the hall hospitality could be provided for the visitors and other family who had come to mourn with the grieving family.

Simultaneously, the Matauala families were fundraising by holding food stalls and socials, adding on more working hours to their days. However, the Matauala elders focus group acknowledged there were unforeseen benefits from this fundraising activity in that it gathered the wider community together and included other Pacific peoples in the project as contributors. They also remembered that the Atafu elders were consistent in their encouragement and presence throughout the fundraising and Matauala construction stages.

### **Matauala Centre - A Community Resource**

The Matauala Centre was opened officially in 1987 after five years in construction. The Tokelauan population within the Porirua basin was growing as was the demand for the use of the Matauala Centre by many local community groups and organisations.

The wider community of Porirua and Wellington frequently use the Matauala Centre, and the Centre and its hall facilities are a popular venue for local schools, pre-schools, youth practices and cultural performances. It is a well-known venue for public meetings between Tokelauan community representatives and government, local government, interdenominational church activities, other generic Pacific community gatherings, conferences and meetings.

The Tokelau community meets there and they prepare themselves at Matauala for many special Tokelau events and tournaments, including youth and volleyball sporting activities. The older members of the community make good use of the Matauala Centre as a gathering place, as a venue for their social events, playing dominos, cards and the usual activities for the elders. The only occasions that stop communal activity at Matauala are funerals.

The new challenge identified by the elders was to evaluate the role Matauala fulfills in relation to the Tokelau families in the Porirua basin. More than 50% of the Tokelauan children born during the building stages were in cross-cultural marriages. For many of these families, the only chance that they will have to practice and speak Tokelauan is at the Matauala Centre. The elders focus group could see that the Matauala Centre continues to have a role in teaching cultural skills that young Tokelauan populations need and that it is timely to consider how the Matauala Centre can meet the needs of the modern Tokelauan family.

For the elders involved in the building of the Matauala Centre, their participation in the research interview about the Matauala Project of Pride was the first time they were part of a process that allowed them to recall the human and familial costs of the Matauala Centre project. After more than two decades, several of the elders acknowledged how tired they were feeling.

Some spoke of the sacrifices their children had made and the costs paid including their children's education because family finances were prioritised for project contributions and meeting the wider community needs. Some of the elders were also conscious that some of their children had grown resentful of their parents' absences and that it was difficult for their children to appreciate the bind that their parents experienced at times.

The balancing of priorities and commitments to family and communities became fraught with tensions that were made more burdensome in the New Zealand context. In Porirua, while some family members live locally, houses are smaller and it was not always possible to bring parental sisters or a grandmother to stay with the children. The Atafu families were without the communal supports where children could be supervised by other adults in the family. While the operations, motivations and vision for the Matauala project were carried out and facilitated through relationships and communal values, the other village-based support structures for families that provided supervision and care of the children were missing.

Communal responsibilities and commitments became the non-negotiable areas whereas the household, educational and supervision needs of children were squeezed tightly between the project and employment responsibilities:

*'... I left them with a community centre but the skills to get on with this place, to get a job that is worthwhile, to pursue a life that is enriching for themselves and their children; I wonder what I have done to them. ... I sit and reflect on this quite often and I am saddened ... I never regret the project. My regret is – could I have done a better balancing act, because from where we come from in Tokelau, it's well known that the village takes care of everything ... it's a total communal way of living.'*

*'... you did not worry about the children because grandma is at home, aunty is at home, and the whole village is responsible for your child and their behaviour. So you know your child is safe because collectively the village takes care of them.'*

Living in Porirua, families were housed in their nuclear family households. The size of the houses limits social contact within the extended family because they are too small to allow meetings of the extended family. New Zealand neighbourhoods still find 40 members of their

Pacific neighbours' extended family arriving for Sunday lunch a daunting sight. The practicalities of hosting this number of people are unworkable in most New Zealand-sized and -styled homes. Consequently, many families use the Matauala Centre as the appropriate place where large numbers of extended family members can attend family gatherings.

As the Matauala community grew, inevitably there were some disagreements along the way. However, the community chose to focus on what brought unity and goodwill to the people in their community rather than focusing on distractions or different agendas. In the Tokelau sense, these things are called pihiaiai or the froth of a spent wave and are finally of little significance.

### **Motivation and Volunteering**

An elder in the focus group talked about the spirit that had moved her at the beginning which has continued to motivate her involvement in the Matauala project. She spoke about enjoying her job where she had made some good friends, but she had always felt there was something missing. Working in a factory was never like working for something that belonged to her:

*'It was always somebody else's factory. Working for somebody else and being motivated by no other thing than to have money, working overtime for no other reason than to have extra money.'*

She did not really feel as much pride in her employment-related achievements although she had gained useful skills there. However, she said on becoming connected to Matauala,

*'I became alive. My whole world changed. The elders were there to remind us of the important stuff, and the simple things ... but I was ... motivated because those were things ... my parents and grandparents taught me in Atafu ... I wasn't getting paid for Matauala, in fact I was paying Matauala ...'*

During work hours she was being paid and she was productive. However, she found a difference in her motivation levels between her employment role and her involvement in Matauala. There, her motivation and commitment moved up to the next level because she felt the spirit of determination and love for Atafu when she carried out unpaid work for Matauala:

*'At Matauala I had the chance to honour the elders, to serve the community where the women had a place as well as the men, where the young ones had the chance to be like me and to serve the Tokelau way.'*

### **Reconnecting with Hope and Direction**

The elders spoke of Tama Manu families, Tokelauan families who have been raised by a generation of parents who were unemployed. These families are seen as less fortunate. There is a sense of hopelessness within these families. Parents seem to have lost their 'compass' or direction and life is a daily struggle for them and their children. The elders felt that these families needed attention urgently.

The elders expressed the view that while government is often expected to care for these families, the Matauala Centre can be part of the answer. The elders felt that the knowledge held by the Matauala community, and the relationships between and among the families and extended families put them in a better position to be able to reach those families and to reconnect them with hope and direction.

The elders were keen to suggest that government assistance is needed to help train Tokelauan workers to work with these families. They saw a need to develop Tokelauan social

services skills in order to assist families and to support them to reach wellbeing again within the Tokelauan community. The elders saw that this could be achieved through alofa, healthier kainga relationships and educational training so that young people reach for and attain their aspirations.

*'We can do this with alofa, with real love based on family relationships, we can assist by providing people with a second chance at education training so that they can join mainstream New Zealand by getting certification, degrees, or whatever they aspire to.'*

There is a Tokelauan saying:

*E goto he fetu, kae tu he fetu na mahina ma o na ika*

(*'As a navigational star sinks into the horizon, another one rises to take its place.'*)

*Na mahina ma ona ika ('Each season brings its own catch and different fish run during different months of the year.'*)

The Matauala Centre has stood the test of time. The vision at the outset included meeting the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of the Atafu community. Matauala has abundantly answered some of those needs. It has met physical needs by providing a place to gather, a place of learning, a place of recreational activities, a place for preparation of meals. Spiritually, Matauala Centre has become a place for conducting church services where loved ones are given their final rites and farewelled. Sunday school and Bible studies take place at Matauala.

Emotionally, Matauala has been a place to hold many community and family social events and functions ranging from dances, Tokelau cultural events and birthday parties. Many celebrations have been held at Matauala. Matauala centre is a place where Tokelau can assist the wider community despite its small population size.

Culturally and psychologically, Matauala is a central place where faka Tokelau is prioritised and Tokelau lore and ethos are the norm. Matauala represents Atafu village and provides a home away from home. The elders felt that through Matauala Centre and all of its contributors and children,

*'Tokelau can stand very tall and say I am somebody.'*

## **The Future**

Several centuries ago, in the times of the Aliko Kava Vahefenua, the conquering warrior king of Tokelau, he launched a war canoe named *Utupepe*. A composer wrote the words of a paddle dance at the launching of this war canoe. Those words remain appropriate when considering the future of the Matauala project:

*'Utupepe Utupepe, Tagaloa tolai fetokai, Utupepe Utupepe, Tagaloa tolai, fetokai. E agina ki Fali ma Fana, kanapa uila ma faititili. Kae ono mea, kae fakatau mai ko molia taku foe nei. Apoapo tau foe alovaka na kavea e te galu tau. Ke mau mai ke mau mai, ke mau mai.'*

*(Utupepe is about to be launched. The hope is that it will go to the home of Tagaloa, the Ocean God, to meet him there. This place is where the winds shift continuously, the seas are rough. It is a fearsome place, a place of lightning and thunder. The crew of the canoe needs to be alert and is encouraged to hold fast their paddles or they will be snatched by the fighting waves.)*

The paddles are a metaphor for the faka Tokelau. If the Tokelau people do not hold on and if they do not hold the paddles tightly, then the canoes will become aimless in that

fearsome place. This is the challenge for the future and the challenges are not the familiar kind.

Our Tokelauan children are exposed to the same environment and context as other New Zealanders, but in many cases our children go into that environment without the same level of social skills or economic security. Young people are dealing with alcohol and drug problems, gambling and violence. Some Tokelauan young people have been recruited by street gangs and the community has been concerned to try to prevent this from escalating. Fortunately, many Tokelauan young people remain strongly connected to their families and communities. Some are still well connected to the spiritual basis of the churches and the Tokelauan community.

When the elders considered the future, it could have seemed daunting given the struggle of other communities in New Zealand with these same issues without any clear successes. However, they recognise that hope lies in the common basis of the Matauala families and their connection to Atafu and the maintenance of the communal values.

The Atafu community is relationally connected. The relationships between brother and sister in the Tokelau tradition have sacred obligations just as they do between uncles and nephews, aunties and nieces. Love and regard for young people is without limit and is defined by the elders within the focus group as unconditional love.

The elders were certain that within this abundance and love there are answers to their concerns about the successful future of Tokelauan young people growing up in New Zealand. They felt that within the Tokelauan culture and its resources of knowledge lay the answers for the future. They did not feel that government agencies have the capacity to assist Tokelauan families. The elders felt that the solutions could be developed by drawing on Tokelauan culture and the love that Tokelauan families have for their children and young people.

The elders were hopeful that, despite having times of vulnerability and sometimes being barely able to make ends meet, they had enough resources to be able to organise themselves based on faka Tokelau. They believed that with the help of their community and family network it was vital to encourage the teaching of faka Tokelau as their defence against the more fearsome aspects of the New Zealand context, which include the loss of the Tokelauan language or Tokelauan cultural values and the weakening of communal relationships.

The Matauala Centre can play a key role in developing modern responses to the concerns and 'fighting waves' that threaten Tokelauan young people and the transmission of faka Tokelau. While the Matauala Centre has been a valuable gathering point and activity centre, it is equally the only place where some young people, and those in cross-cultural marriages, can hear Tokelauan being spoken and experience faka Tokelau being practised. The Matauala Centre gives this group of Tokelauans access to the culture, their grandparents, elders and spiritual leaders.

The elders raised the issue of shared responsibility amongst the Tokelauan community households where a generation may have been unemployed and have had little money, who are in despair and who have lost their way. Under these circumstances while it is important for government to do its part for the management of the economy and the provision of social services, the other part of the solution lies with Tokelauan families.

On Atafu, the Taupulega worked to create solutions and all sectors of the Atafu community were represented and took part in solving problems. However, in New Zealand Tokelauan peoples have looked to government for help but this is not achieving the desired results. Some young people are ending up in jail or in gangs, and living lives that are '*no life for anybody*'. The elders spoke of the need for parents to honour their responsibilities too:

*'Our sense of helplessness needs to stop. We need to help ourselves ... the spirit of responsibility and helping ourselves needs to come to the fore. There is no point of asking somebody to help us if we don't sit down and work through the answers ourselves.'*

The strength of the Matauala Centre is doing things as a community. Balancing Tokelauan and New Zealand values is not an easy thing to do. However, the Matauala Centre gives importance to the values and way of life of Atafu that the elders wish to protect and balance with the modern needs of Tokelauan families. On that basis, the Matauala Centre can assist in bringing about better lives for the community connected to Atafu.

In the future, it will be vital to consider urgently the capacity development and skills basis for many Tokelauan young people who work in jobs that nobody else would do which are poorly paid, poorly recognised and that do little to increase self-esteem and give little hope for future improvement. While members of the community come from backgrounds where parents are hard workers, there are many families who do not hold regular daytime jobs. There are still many who work in the casual industries of cleaning and service work. The elders would like to develop economic and capacity development projects to change this.

The other aspect that flows on from the economic development issues is the need for the Atafu community to develop their independent community groups and resources in order to provide services and organise community initiatives. However, part of this strategy would be to assist the community groups to develop the administrative and management support that they need to operate efficiently and transparently. Unfortunately, some groups have become prey to corruption by both those within and those outside who were entrusted with management responsibilities.

The operations and administration of the Matauala Centre can benefit from such supports so that proper accountability is the norm and the local community is trained in the fulfillment of statutory obligations. These are important in order to put Matauala into the best position to enter into funding partnerships especially with government.

The elders identified that the resourcing possible from government in the areas of education and training gives the kinds of opportunities that they want to make available for the young people at Matauala. They want to start with training:

*'... by training our own young people to help those people who need to be helped first ... but we also need to train people to provide the kind of learning opportunities that many of our kids have missed out on.'*

However, the elders recognised that this takes a strong level of people and administrative organisation and it takes money. How do we achieve that? In their words:

*'We do that in the normal Tokelau way – you don't have one method, you have a variety of fishing methods to feed everyone. The variety of fishing methods here include the kind of bridging courses for those who have missed out on education.'*

They felt it was important to provide training in basic computing skills, and linking young people in to trades training and bridging courses so that they enter mainstream courses *ready to succeed*. They also felt that it would be useful to carry out some specific research on the Tokelau community in order to find ways to increase the basis of their economic participation and to increase the Tokelauan community's share of the economic gains.

The abundant hope for the future for Matauala does not involve radical change: the current needs are clear as are the paths to the solutions. However, expansion is needed and

educational strategies are vital to addressing the economic wellbeing of the Matauala community.

The other challenge is the need to find the best methods of empowering Tokelauan people so that there is a greater inclusion and ability to participate in decision-making for their future and to determine the ways forward.

Elders considered that there is a need to take these issues to the Tokelauan communities and to hold workshops within the community on the socio-economic direction for the future. They considered that the situation of the Tokelauan people was very different to that of the average New Zealand household and therefore the approaches must differ.

In Tokelauan culture, the greatest strengths must be balanced – for example, the balance between the exercise of leadership or pule, and experience in the management of others, including workers. It is vital that leaders who exercise pule have the ability to manage conflict, to manage differing viewpoints, to manage a meeting, to ensure a meeting flows, to ensure that everyone in a meeting understands what is being decided and that participants contribute to the discussion. Without balance and experience in these areas, leadership becomes problematic.

Community and organisational development work and educational strategies then are not just for the benefit of young people – but are needed by the wider community. The developmental work is important for the older generation so they can fulfill the vision and purposes of Matauala based on Tokelauan cultural knowledge and love in order to bring people together and to ensure that everyone is able to participate and to benefit. If these motivations and values are combined with the modern context and possibilities, the elders felt there was enormous hope for the future of Matauala and all of her connected families.

*Our prayer is that Matauala can answer that call of Tokelau.  
The modern need of the community needs to be answered.*

*Tokelau taku pele  
Teu i te lotu  
E he galo koe i oku manatu  
E galo au kae manatua  
Ko toku hei mai anamua.*

*Tokelau my beloved  
Secure in my heart  
Always in my thoughts though I have left  
I still remember my garland  
from ancient times.*

## **Summary**

This summary sets out a response by this case study and project of pride for Tokelau to the research questions.

### **Tokelauan people's world views of volunteering, their values and meaning systems that underpin these views and associated social practices**

The genealogical and cultural context shared by the Matauala community connects them not only to each other, but also to Atafu and therefore Tokelau. Human life in Atafu is lived in relationship with the supporting lands, flora and fauna, bird life, marine and human

environments. The relationships between the human and natural environment are protected and guarded by communal values developed over generations to ensure the wellbeing of the community in the long term. Leadership of the collective is provided through the Taupulega elders council who work together with the leaders of the Aumaga and Fatupaepae. Together they make decisions for the common good of the Atafu community.

Belonging then in Atafu is described as membership within the O Tu, the Atafu metaphor for the collective, within which the self resides for sustenance and safety. The O Tu metaphor illustrates that the wellbeing of the whole takes precedence over individual benefit. However, individual talents and contributions to the collective are illustrated by the tifa Tokelau and its division into separate pa, or fishing lure. In this metaphor, the separate individuals are given attention, their talents appreciated and encouraged as they contribute to the wellbeing and the range of strengths within the collective tifa Tokelau.

This context birthed the communal values shared by Tokelauans. It was the yearning for these freedoms and the need for an especially dedicated Tokelauan space, within which they could openly express their communal and cultural values, that led to the vision for the Matauala Centre. It is that vision which has driven the design, construction, growth and maintenance of the Matauala project.

#### *Relationship and collective responsibilities as powerful motivators*

At the outset elders felt a responsibility to create a home away from home, thereby meeting their own need for a Tokelauan place of belonging as well as responding to the need to have a place where young Tokelauans could have access to their culture, kaiga and motu. These are powerful motivators for the Tokelauan relational self who finds belonging within the collective.

The Matauala project community established a place where they could be free to be themselves, speak their language and practise their own ritual, ceremonies and activities, and restore their own leadership and organisational structures.

The other powerful motivator that elders spoke of was the Au, the metaphorical organ of the human body within which love for children resides which urged them towards construction with the goal to provide young people with a place where they could learn to participate in appropriate and familiar groupings.

#### *The range and nature of unpaid activities*

Contributions made to the project over the years include leadership, preparations for building, and negotiating with designers, engineers, contractors and local government officials. Multiple ranges of fundraising efforts over the years before, during and since construction of the main building continue in order to sustain and maintain the buildings and the projects accommodated within it. The care taking and on-going care of the land and the buildings are all carried out as commitments to the project.

#### *The concepts that best capture the nature of volunteering and the fulfillment of cultural obligations from this project*

This project of pride illustrates that volunteering for this community has the purpose of benefiting the common good of the community. While the individual self and kaiga are unique like the pa, they work together and respect the guidance of the Taupulega to achieve wellbeing as a collective or as the tifa Tokelau metaphor illustrates.



Working together as a sequenced collective as in the formation of the O Tu has helped the Matauala project community to achieve their goal of building a place of belonging, to protect the community and its knowledge and social structures, and to be able to pass this on to the next generation.

Communally managing projects and resources are skills learned in Atafu. These skills have helped to ensure that present needs can be met while at the same time safeguarding the fulfillment of cultural obligations to redistribute the shared benefits through the te inati system.

The concept of cultural obligation is enacted through the commitment to transplant the familiar to Aotearoa New Zealand – to grow a part of Atafu and Tokelau at the Matauala centre.

#### Some impacts on Tokelauan peoples and their families

Through building the Matauala Centre, many of the community gained valuable insights and experience in the building of a community facility that serves communal needs. Fundraising efforts absorbed many of the project participants who managed to maintain their employment obligations at the same time. While elders acknowledged this was hard work, they also acknowledged that the popular strategy of hosting fundraising socials was also a means of gathering and strengthening relationships across the Tokelauan and wider Pacific communities, at the same time gathering on-going support for and understanding of their project.

The elders reflected on the project, some for the first time, and considered the intense level of their contributions, sometimes at the cost of family and time with their children. However, they also pointed to the fact that their children had gained regular access to their kaiga and other Atafu people through their participation in the building of the Matauala centre. The other unexpected benefit from the long years of participation was that the young people learned first hand about the value of endurance and determination and that these qualities bring success that can be shared with their families and communities into the future.

# CANTERBURY FIJI SOCIAL SERVICES - A FIJIAN PROJECT OF PRIDE

*Tony Qalivutu and Arieta Tabua*

## **Acknowledgments**

Acknowledgements and thanks go to the interviewees from the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust founder, Mr Tony Qalivutu. The story of this project of pride for the Fijian communities is told by Tony Qalivutu, representing the many contributors to the Canterbury Fiji Social Services trust since 1992.

Contributions have been made by many over the years and we acknowledge them here, including the Qalivutu family; the founding members of the Fijian Advisory Council and the Fijian Community Incorporated; Pacific peoples of Christchurch who have supported the development of this Trust; volunteers and supporters over the years who have given their skills to cook, clean, fundraise, paint, build and maintain buildings, and help with programmes; social work students who contributed and supervised, developed and led activities; networks of support that have believed in the vision of the Council and Trust, and who have kept paying the costs of their volunteer roles; and all the people who have helped strengthen the Trust into the community resource it has become.

It is also important to acknowledge the support of the other Canterbury social service and helping agencies and funders who have contributed in such a way that the trust has been able to be established and to flourish into the future.

This project evolved from the strong interest of a key motivating person – Tony Qalivutu – but the vision, heart and commitment were not his alone. They have grown and been shared by many elders and young people, their families and children since 1992. The Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust has grown into a community resource about which the many communities of Fijians and Pacific peoples can feel much pride and from which they can draw inspiration.

Our acknowledgement and thanks go to Mrs Arieta Tabua, facilitator, who went to Christchurch to carry out the interview and translation work that made the transcription task simpler.

It is our hope that this record is faithful to the inspirational spirit and vision of you all. It has been an honour to be able to tell this story and help in its recording for the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust.

## **Introduction**

*Dui Seva Ga Na Bua Ko A Tea*

We will reap whatever we sow; if you love and care for people, you will be cared for.

The Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust was chosen as the project of pride for Fiji as part of the research study into Pacific conceptions and perspectives of cultural obligations and volunteering. The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs Fijian members, Fijian members of the Research Reference Group, and members of the Fijian community in Wellington chose to highlight the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust as the first Fijian social service

established. It is a project that has inspired other projects and goes on to be a source of community pride for Fijians throughout New Zealand.

In the early hours of one morning in 1990, while visiting Auckland, Fijian Tony Qalivutu was driving through the central city. He found a group of Fijian young people who had obviously been drinking alcohol wandering in the central city streets. This sight brought home to him the fact that many Fijian young people growing up in New Zealand were likely to find themselves vulnerable and susceptible to the alienation of being in a society where they did not easily belong, where their own family relationships were weakened, and where they might suffer from aimlessness and a loss of self-respect.

This vivid experience continued to trouble him. He knew that he wanted to prevent more young Fijians falling into this behaviour and he began to think about what he could do. He became committed to starting up a social service to support Fijian youths, and to help them achieve and to make more positive contributions to the Fijian and New Zealand communities.

This case study traces this story and that of the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust from its earliest days to the present.

## Canterbury Fiji Social Services

*'Na bucini ni sore ni kau vinaka me yaga ena veigauna mai muri'*

*'I started having ideas of maybe one day I will start a social service ... I wanted something unique for my people ...'*

### Background: New Zealand in 1990

When Fiji began to experience political instability in the form of militarily-led coups in the early 1990s, many Fijians and their families moved to New Zealand. In 1987, Pacific rates of unemployment in New Zealand were 6.1%, but by 1990 Zealand had its highest unemployment levels for 50 years<sup>9</sup> and by 1992, Pacific rates of unemployment had increased to 28.8%.<sup>10</sup> This affected Pacific families dramatically, especially those whose adult members were employed in the manufacturing sector. Redundancies were common at the time.

It was within this context that in 1992, after many years of work, Tony Qalivutu was made redundant and received a redundancy payout. On considering his options, he chose to take his redundancy payout and invest it in establishing the Fijian Advisory Council under the umbrella of the Fijian Community Incorporated. The latter organisation was established by a group of elders who had seen the need to form a legal entity to help Fijians resident in New Zealand:

*'I wanted something that would benefit Fijian education and family. I was involved with a lot of agencies such as health, education and government and this made me understand more about what was going on in the community...'*

### The Organisations

The Fijian Advisory Council began with the initial intention to *'advise, support and care for our Fijians'*. 'Our Fijians' included the many Fijian students who came to Canterbury to study who were seen to experience 'culture shock' when they moved from Fiji to New Zealand.

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<sup>9</sup> Article on net, Denmark, 2000.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.stats.govt.nz/products-and-services/Articles/Pac-ppl-emp-income-Dec02.htm>

Tony Qalivutu was the only field worker for the Fijian Advisory Council at that time, and rent and working costs were contributed from his redundancy payout. In the early years, most of the support and volunteer help for the Fijian Advisory Council was given by the Qalivutu family members who had supported Tony 'all the way through'.

By 1993, the numbers of students and families visiting the Fijian Advisory Council was growing.

Relationships and connections with other helping agencies also strengthened over time, and through these relationships Tony Qalivutu was able to access additional services and information. With the increasing numbers of visitors, another worker was needed. The Council and its sole worker were both conscious of the need to establish a youth-focused programme.

The troubling scene witnessed in Auckland three years before had stayed in Tony's memory. Awareness was growing about the need to do something about the numbers of Fijians and Pacific young people going through the courts system in Christchurch. This coincided with the Fijian Advisory Council agreeing that more space was needed to give privacy to clients, and to create more car parks. An office was set up in Hillary Crescent, in Upper Riccarton, Christchurch.

At the same time, the idea of *who* Fijians were was expanding because of who was being serviced by the council. The focus of the Council became more inclusive and was directed at all Fijian and Pacific peoples settling into New Zealand life in Christchurch so that they could access the services available and be linked into each other and to community activities. By 1995, the students and families being advised and serviced included Indians, other Pacific nations people, Asians and Europeans who had lived in Fiji before moving to New Zealand. There was a huge growth in numbers and range of clients.

The Fijian Advisory Council had reached its next stage of development. It decided that volunteers were needed to help run it, and that it should develop a new identity and name to reflect its new services. In 1995, it became the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust.

When the Trust was formed, the vision was to:

*'...create and develop cultural, vibrant, academic and social programmes for all Fijian people and other ethnic groups living in the Canterbury area'. (p. 5)*

The motivation continued to be the creation of a service for Fijian people that ensured:

*'... that our youths were looked after and did not go through the court system. I was also working to ensure that our families from Fiji were looked after within New Zealand. So one of the most motivating factors ... was having the heart to help them and having the heart to make sure they were looked after'.*

The vision has not changed. Assisting young people and their families within the Fijian community, and people from other ethnic groups to have a better life, is still the vision of the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust. When children came in to the office or elders came in for sessions, it was the workers' responsibility to cook a meal.

It took a few years for the Fijian community to learn about and understand the need for this project, and what the work involved. Within the community, Pacific families were settling in and they were striving daily to meet their own basic needs as families. There was not a lot of spare time or resources to support voluntary work for the Canterbury Fiji Social Services. However, over time people came to the Trust when they were experiencing problems or needed help, and so people began to understand the meaning of the project and why it was being run. Fijian people from Christchurch started to have more trust in and a

better understanding of what the project was about, and its aims and vision, and this made them become interested in helping out.

The beginnings were very humble. The only office equipment purchased at the start was a typewriter:

*'I got a little typewriter. The typewriter didn't have the letter 'P' but that was alright. Everything I did – all the letters – the letter 'P' had to be written in pen.'*

### **Relationships, Contributions and Volunteering**

The project was helped by the church network to which Trust members belonged, and members of the Fijian Church a bit later. However, the most consistent support came from those in closest relationship with the workers – family members provided the most support:

*'They helped out because of their connection to us as the committee and so they became connected to the [Fiji Canterbury Social Services Trust] and we worked together.'*

Through this network, skilled helpers were attracted to help run the service. The impact of having these skilled workers was that awareness about the services grew even more within the Fijian community, and so did the contribution and participation of Fijian people:

*'Na nodra cau nai tabagone'*

*'... the people started to relate to each other, parents also had a place for their children where they were safe, where they were able to be with other children from the same cultural group. So this is what kept them connected – the togetherness, participation and working together. This was a big contribution over the years.'*

Alongside the on-going support of the Qalivutu household, other contributions were made, including contributions of time spent away from family or family commitments, and contributions of work, materials and money that have supported the operation of the project.

When it was establishing itself, the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust hosted social work students who wanted to make a contribution through their social work placements. In exchange, the students had the opportunity to improve their skills in social work and to strengthen their experience in working with Fijian and Pacific youth and families. The contributions exchanged over the years have benefited those needing work experience placements, and all of the families the student social workers supported.

There have always been differences in the levels of participation between adults and younger people. Reasons for the differences include the impact that voluntary activity can have on Fijian people, such as costs, income and transportation costs. Doing voluntary activity takes money. In the early days when people first come from Fiji, it is hard for them to take part in volunteering:

*'They would do [voluntary activity] as a family obligation [in Fiji] ... but the difference over here is that they have to travel and it costs money to travel and move from one place to another, they have to have the means of transport and they had to have the time ... the impacts are quite hard, the impact I would say was a lot on them so a lot of people didn't do voluntary work ...'*

Because of the open environment at the Canterbury Fiji Social Services, Fijian and Pacific children and youth have been able to seek advice and support, and to open up and share their problems. Many of these young people have since become volunteers.

Sometimes it has been difficult for young volunteers to help their parents to understand the differences between their parents' ways and the lives of young Fijian people

growing up in New Zealand. During fundraising drives, it was difficult to bring Fijian adults in to help, and some people might think that because it is hard to bring adults to help, their children will not come. But it is not like that. Fijian children came to help despite their parents not coming with them:

*'Tabagone.'*

*'The young people here wanted to do the volunteer work and they see its value differently to their parents.'*

Young people like taking part in volunteer activities that include helping other young people and even helping those going through the court system. They want to do volunteer work because they can see the benefits of participating.

They have taken part in a big way – in school holiday programmes, after-school programmes, activities and handicrafts, painting, games, sports, and with homework and reading. Their participation has been high – especially among children from low-income families.

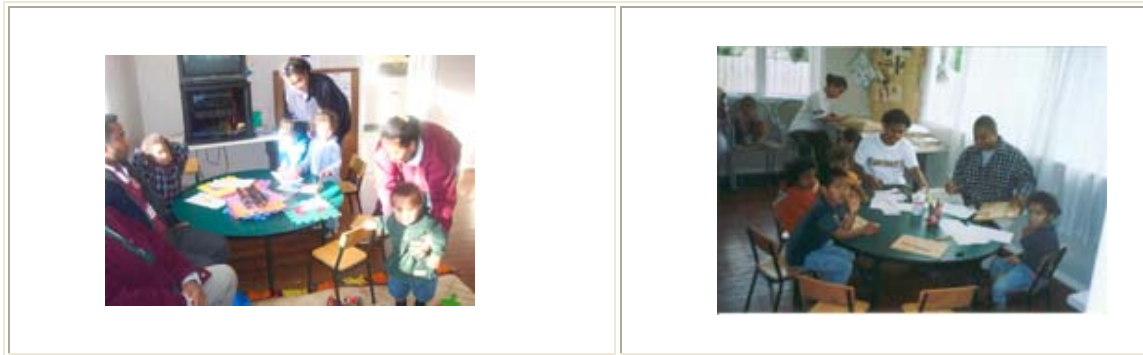
Looking back, Trust members see that young people have now grown into young workers who are leading their own lives and remember that they have contributed a lot over the years. The young people have helped with fundraising, cleaning the church or cleaning up other houses. Many young people who once needed the services and programmes that the Trust provided got access to the help they needed, and their involvement is therefore reciprocal. It has been heartening for Trust members, workers and volunteers to look back and appreciate these contributions and to see how each of these young people has contributed back to the project.

### **Change for the Better, 'Vinaka cake na kilai ni tovo kei ni vosa vakaviti'**

The improving economy of New Zealand since the mid-1990s has created positive impacts for the Trust. In the earliest days of the Fijian Advisory Council and the Trust, there was very little interest by government in Pacific community groups providing services for their own peoples and communities, and even less in funding these kinds of social services. Now there are more resources so that Fijians can go out and help Fijians and Pacific peoples.

The improved economic context means that more people are being employed and are getting better qualified and the Trust has been able to bring in enough money to employ qualified people and improve the skills of its workforce. These are all critical changes for the better.

Growing up Fijian means access to Fijian culture and language. In earlier generations, the push to keep the culture or language alive was not so strong, but now, since being in New Zealand, Fijian children are using their language and culture. Since people are motivated to learn Fijian language and culture, the Trust felt that they must have access to quality language and culture programmes, especially for children from lower income families. This has become one of the drivers for the project, guiding changes that have resulted in better quality programmes and services.



Children grow up differently in the New Zealand context. In Tony Qalivutu's generation, he grew up being part of a Sunday school, being part of a group of young people. In New Zealand, there is less of this kind of structure in family life, but by having access to Fijian culture and language and good quality programmes, young Fijian people can live a safe life and contribute positively both here in New Zealand and in Fiji:

*'My belief is that we must remember they are only young and they need us to remember they too are struggling with culture shock.'*

The projects and activities carried out through the project are chosen to help to maintain young people's sense of belonging. This is consistent with what parents normally teach their children about their culture and their identity. It is still up to parents to teach their children about their culture, but the project has a responsibility to support that teaching through chosen activities, and to help in a situation where there is the potential for culture loss.

According to Tony Qalivutu, it is the small things that you teach children now that will carry them a long way. These small things will never be lost, and the kinds of activities that the Trust chooses to teach as a support for the teaching that goes on in families must maintain and encourage a sense of belonging. This helps to build safer lives for all Fijian children.

## **Programmes of the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust**

### **Tuvatuva ni veiqaravi, Elders Oaken Spirit Programme<sup>11</sup>**

This programme provides the elders, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged and socially isolated, with a respected role, a sense of belonging, and access to participation which is vital for Fijian and Pacific elders. The Elders Oaken Spirit programme includes a range of activities that support their wellbeing emotionally, psychologically, physically, intellectually, spiritually and culturally.

The participants enjoy sessions twice a week at Hei Hei, where they can participate in craft activities, practice for upcoming performances at various events, play cards, revive cultural songs and dances, and often enjoy a shared meal together. Other activities include

<sup>11</sup> Some of the content and pictures are drawn from the CFSST website: [www.cfsst.org.nz](http://www.cfsst.org.nz)

outdoor bowls, visits to different organisations, health talks and ten pin bowling. The elders are lively participants and performers at different cultural events.



*In action at Culture Galore*

*Craft activities*

*Reviving songs*

### **School Holiday Programmes**

The school holiday programmes are unique because they appeal to children from different cultural backgrounds and they provide an opportunity to engage cross culturally. The building of a sense of belonging and relationship, and the mutual respect that comes through sharing cultural awareness, play a very important role in the community.

### **Fijian Language Nest**

The language nest teaches Fijian language to Fijian children. Quite a few of the children who attend are from economically disadvantaged families who also experience social isolation. The building and nurturing of the children's sense of belonging is vital in the beginning years of their lives as much as it is for the elders in their last years.

Activities are organised for the families of the children attending the language nest and they are also included in craft sessions. There is often singing or card games followed by enjoying a meal together. All these activities go beyond 'language nest' responsibilities, but for the Trust they are all important in building and strengthening a sense of family within the Fijian community.

The language nest and the school holiday and after-school programmes are intended to support parents to keep their employment obligations so that they do not have to take time off to supervise their children. This helps families and parents feel more confident and have positive self-esteem at work because they know their children are with safe supervisors in a family-like environment. The Trust provides supervisors and trainers for programmes and volunteers – all sources of future inspiration and support for the project.

### **Youth at Risk Programme – the Green Light Project**

*'Some of our young people have been through racial discrimination and suicide so we bring them here to try and maintain their sense of belonging within the culture and the community.'*  
(p. 10)

The motivating vision driven by the Auckland scene in 1990 is now being realised through the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust. The Trust is actively engaged in a number of preventative projects involving youth at risk. The Trust involves young Fijian and Pacific people in running programmes that include recreation, camping, workshops, training opportunities and employment. The people on these programmes are between 15–25 years.

The work with young people is intensive and demands skilled workers who can deal with drug and alcohol counselling, as well as under-age pregnancy counselling and support. For many of these young people, family relationships have been weakened and parents have



been subject to threats and bad behaviour. Some young people have experienced constant counselling, moving from one problem to another.

All the youths who have been in contact with the Trust through the youth at risk programme have talked about committing suicide, killing someone or harming other people. They have frequently experienced racial discrimination. The Trust continues to provide a place where these young people can come to, and there is no other service in Canterbury that can work with these Fijian and Pacific young people. This intensive work is highly motivating for Trust workers.

*'We need to stay together to do something for Fijian people so that they will have somewhere to go when things fall apart, they will have someone to talk to when they are not listened to.'* (p. 7)

Sometimes young people get involved in a spiral of partying, drunkenness and anti-social behaviour that can involve stealing and violence. Many who have been through the court system share common experiences of neglect and a lack of close and safe relationships while they were growing up. If there is a need that is not being met regarding these young people, then the Trust tries to offer it.

For our youths, we have to try and maintain their sense of belonging in their culture and community, and this can be achieved by supporting appropriate youth activities. It is important to praise the achievements of young people and for them to acknowledge that the Trust has been able to help them to achieve and maintain a sense of belonging and inclusion of their youth culture in our culture and community.

## **The Success of the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust**

The Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust has depended on volunteers, both qualified and unqualified. While having skilled community workers with good qualifications is vital, those skills are made more valuable when they are 'grounded' in a willingness to 'work with the people', and when relationships are developed with agencies like the Trust during the years of academic training.

The Trust has always taken time to survey the local area and look at local needs. It has been important for the Trust to be aware of what already exists in Canterbury and where there are gaps, and to be committed to providing the best quality services possible to meet the needs not currently being met. In 1990, there were no Fijian social services anywhere in New Zealand; in fact, there were hardly any social services for Pacific people at all. The relationships and support of other Canterbury helping agencies have positively influenced the ability of the Trust to be established and to flourish in Canterbury:

*'You also need to look at the people, look at the people in your area and their weaknesses and their needs because when you are out there you have to be committed.'* (p. 8)

Funding is a vital issue to every community group including the Trust. However, like other Pacific community groups, there have been many years when the Trust has operated despite having very little independent funding. The families of the Trust members and participants have contributed directly to sustaining the Trust in its earliest years and supplementing the development of the Trust through 'volunteer' unpaid work.

## **Positive Outcomes for Elders, Women, Men and Young People**

Keeping the elders connected to one another and to the Trust members and participants is important. Elders who are able to get out of the house are picked up and brought to the project

as an outing, sometimes twice a week. The Trust provides some hospitality and they have their own session together which they run for themselves.

Elders teach us about the importance and impact of what our grandparents taught us and what our parents taught us – and that this stays with us all our lives. Our elders have been there for us as good role models both to those who were born and raised in Fiji and for those living this different lifestyle in New Zealand.

In Fiji, things are structured differently and speaking is normally done by men. Living in New Zealand, we see that people are starting to share things more fairly and there are changes in the life of families. Women can go out and mingle now, and go to work or do volunteering work, for example, cooking or cleaning at the project.

Men have started to help each other, working as a team and making their contribution to the project. They have worked together to paint the building and helped with the outside work. The positive impact has been that they have learned to work together as a community and as men.

The project for young people has created big and positive impacts. It has given them a safe place and a safe environment to go to where they can share or talk about what is happening in their lives. The project has enabled them to socialise together with other young people, and it has made them more self-motivated and built up their confidence. Their self-esteem has improved and they are always happy and feel safe in our environment.

At present, they help young people from other cultures learn English, and to socialise together as young people from different cultures and backgrounds, increasing their awareness of and sensitivity to each other's cultures.

### **Building Relationships**

*'We have Pacific people, we have Maori people and we have other ethnic groups here in Aotearoa and one of the positive impacts has been to learn about each other and be aware and sensitive to each other's culture which enables them to build a better relationship.'*

Programmes run by the Trust have always encouraged positive approaches to different cultural backgrounds so that Fijian children have the opportunity to develop their cross-cultural learning and skills. This experience has a positively beneficial role in the local community. Participating in Trust programmes has positive effects like providing parents and young people with possibilities to develop their work and education opportunities. Young people benefit through witnessing these opportunities being eagerly taken up.

Positive impacts involve people getting together, working together, having a safe environment where it does not matter which culture people come from – people are respected and children flourish. At the end of the day, the Trust provides a service that creates and develops vibrant cultural, academic and social programmes for all of the cultural groups living in the Canterbury area.

The trust has always believed in the importance of supporting people and their families, providing opportunities to build self-confidence, self-motivation and self-esteem. The trust with the help and support of many people has built on the life and social skills that are important especially for Fijian and Pacific families who are often on lower incomes. This benefits family life. These kinds of positive impacts are what the trust is trying to achieve.

*'This project was started with a better life for young people as the vision. It may be that the project will go through some changes in the next 10 years, but the important thing is that this project will exist through our people's participation and that participation will continue to shape its future.'*

## Summary

This summary sets out a response by this case study and project of pride for Fiji to the research questions.

### **Fijian people's world views of volunteering, the values and meaning systems that underpin these views and associated social practices**

It was out of a context of economic and community crisis that Fijians in the Canterbury area gathered together and formed a legal entity called the Fijian Community Incorporated. The Fijian Community then transformed into the Fijian Advisory Council whose objectives included advising, supporting and caring for the Fijian community.

*Dui Seva Ga Na Bua Ko A Tea* is a Fijian proverb that demonstrates the Fijian worldview of loloma, or loving and caring for others which fulfills and is returned to the self. It is through the giving and sharing of this care and the commitment to care for others that wellbeing is achieved for the self, the matavuvale, provinces and confederacies and the Fijian nation.

The cultural values of collectively supporting and caring for newly settled Fijians, and a shared concern for the Fijian students who were studying in Canterbury brought people together. Trust members, volunteers and workers were concerned to keep these families and young people together so that culturally, socially and academically they would succeed in the context of Canterbury.

The Fijian community was therefore responding to needs within their community and collectively moved to find solutions in order to ensure that Fijian people and others who approached them for support got the care and support needed. The success of the families and students reflects positively on the entire Fijian community within the Canterbury region.

### **The range and nature of the unpaid contributions**

All of the contributors to the Trust worked without salary, paying the costs of their volunteering themselves because of their mutual commitment to each other as family or because they shared a cultural obligation to assist, care for and support others who had approached the Trust for assistance. Funding for community social services in the early 1990s was shrinking anyway rather than becoming more accessible, and this was the case especially for newer Pacific island agencies.

The ability of Tony Qalivutu and his dedicated volunteers to develop mutually positive relationships with local social services agencies and government departments helped greatly to smooth the paths of advocacy when needed.

While any adults within the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust network contributed their time, energies, skills and resources to develop the Trust, some of the most enthusiastic contributors and volunteers have been the young people. They have often assisted with supervising programmes, cleaning or fundraising efforts. They were able to contribute their time and energies when their parents had to focus on employment responsibilities.

The young people and the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust members added to the values of the Trust their determination and commitment to better life outcomes for Fijian people as new settlers in New Zealand and specifically to children and other young people who were experiencing vulnerability or hardship through being new settlers to New Zealand and Canterbury.

### **Fijian concepts that best capture the nature of volunteering, unpaid activities and fulfillment of cultural obligations in the Trust**

*Dui Seva Ga Na Bua Ko A Tea*, or loving and caring for others fulfills our sense of self and wellbeing, is a belief that underpins the Trust. The Trust elders recognised that many contributions over the years were made because of this reciprocal principal. Fijian elders pointed out that they practised these forms of communal support in Fiji which is why they have been able to carry on this practice in New Zealand.

Fijian commitment and responsibility to each other as powerful motivators for volunteering

The Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust developed as a response to a socio-economic crisis and the awareness that within the Fijian community there was the need for a structured social services intervention. While the volunteer base was small in number, they were committed to the need to offer care and support to families so that they could achieve wellbeing. Caring for and supporting others was regarded as a primary responsibility.

Another key motivator for the Trust from its earliest days has been its visibility within the wider Canterbury community and its positive presence for the Fijian and Pacific community in the social services arena and as a partner agency to other related agencies.

It has always been the vision and commitment of the Trust to get the best quality programmes and professional help – as volunteers or as paid workers – within the Trust so that it can provide the best quality support to the community. It believes that this is what the community deserves and needs, and it regards it as its primary responsibility as a social service agency to offer the best assistance, support and caring so that families and young people achieve wellbeing.

### **The impacts of voluntary activity on the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust and their families**

The impacts of supporting the development of the Trust over the years are multi layered. For the Qalivutu family, there was the contribution of financial resources to support the Trust and meet basic costs in the initial years. For Tony, the work fluctuated but steadily grew, meaning time away from usual family responsibilities, and his family becoming the first volunteers for Trust activities.

The young people who have volunteered over the years have had the benefit of access to guidance from people who care for them in the way that family in Fiji cares for its members.

The Trust has contributing to the development of social and community workers who are better trained and skilled to help new settler groups and who reciprocate in turn, often returning to assist at the Trust for periods of time. The work of the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust has developed to be inclusive of other new settlers, and the ability to build healthy and respectful relationships across non-Pacific cultures has been a strength demonstrated through the cultural and inclusive approaches being taken by the Trust. Importantly, this case study project of pride tells the story of a social service about which Fijians across New Zealand can feel proud and continue to be inspired by.

## THE INVOLVEMENT OF NIUE ISLANDERS IN THE GREAT WAR 1914–1918 – A NIUEAN PROJECT OF PRIDE

*Margaret Pointer*

*Roll of Honour: Men from the Niue Contingent who Died Whilst Enlisted in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, 1915–1916*



Vilipate of Liku. O'Neill's Point Cemetery, Auckland, New Zealand.

Kaimanu of Hikutavake. Suez War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.

Mitikele of Hakupu. Tel-el-Kebir War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.

Tionesini of Hakupu. Bailleul Communal Cemetery, France.

Tauetuli of Liku. Bailleul Communal Cemetery, France.

Vasau of Alofi. St Andrew's Churchyard, Hornchurch, England.

Taleva of Tamakautoga. St Andrew's Churchyard, Hornchurch, England.

Filitoua of Makefu. St Andrew's Churchyard, Hornchurch, England.

Peni of Hikutavake. Buried at sea. Recorded on Memorial Arch, Karori Cemetery, Wellington, New Zealand.

Pulu of Hikutavake. Buried at sea. Recorded on Memorial Arch, Karori Cemetery, Wellington, New Zealand.

Tiueatama of Lakepa. Buried at sea. Recorded on Memorial Arch, Karori Cemetery, Wellington, New Zealand.

Vaihola of Avatele. Buried at sea. Recorded on Memorial Arch, Karori Cemetery, Wellington, New Zealand.

Moki of Fatiau. St Andrew's Churchyard, Hornchurch, England.

Pineki of Alofi. Buried at sea. Recorded on Memorial Arch, Karori Cemetery, Wellington, New Zealand.

Timoko of Hakupu. Waikumete Soldiers' Cemetery, Auckland, New Zealand.

19.12.16 Taumataua of Lakepa. Waikumete Soldiers' Cemetery, Auckland, New Zealand.

## **Acknowledgements**

I have been asked to contribute to the project of pride for Niue by providing this case study of Niue's involvement in World War I. The case study is a summary of the book I wrote while living on Niue from 1997 to 2000. I am very happy to provide this case study so that more people may learn of the contribution made by the Niue contingent through their inclusion in the Maori (later the Pioneer) Battalion.

The book is fully referenced in the hope that it will provide signposts to others undertaking Pacific research. It contains extensive acknowledgements to all those individuals and organisations that helped in the research. There are some individuals who I would like to acknowledge once more. The Premier of Niue, Young Vivian, was an ardent supporter of the project from its inception. He has a keen sense of the need for a people to understand their past in order to fully embrace their future. I thank him for his encouragement and support. The Returned Services Association on Niue followed up my offer to help with historical research and I carried out this work on their behalf. The President, Kalaisi Folau, Secretary, Sisikefutama Sisikefu, and committee member, Vahatau Puleoti, gave much help and I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know these three gentlemen. Kalaisi undertook the task of translation into Niuean as a labour of love in memory of his own father's involvement in the contingent. Ligi Sisikefu, Niue Government Librarian and Archivist, provided an invaluable link to the local community and taught me much about Niuean family history. Many libraries, research centres, archives and individuals in Niue, New Zealand and the UK also helped and are acknowledged in the book.

The result of the research was twofold. A permanent exhibition was created at the Huanaki Cultural centre in Alofi to record the story of the Niue Contingent. Cyclone Heta, in January 2004, destroyed the Centre and of course the exhibition. The Institute of Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific also undertook to publish the work with funding from both the New Zealand Government, through the New Zealand High Commission on Niue, and the Niue Government. Fortunately this means that some of the material held by the Niue Museum and Niue Library is recorded in the book and is not lost completely to the ravages of cyclones.

My final acknowledgement is to the people of Niue who allowed me to undertake this research. I was constantly aware that I had been entrusted with a taoga, that I must treat it with the utmost respect and love, and that I must return it to the people of the island. I have done my best to tell their story, and my trip back to Niue in 2001 to hand over the finished book is an experience that will stay with me always. As a New Zealander, I hope my work goes some way to saying fakaaue lahi to the people of Niue.

Margaret Pointer

April 2006

## **New Zealand and Niuean Involvement in WWI**

When war was declared in Europe in August 1914, Niue was as far away from the conflict as could possibly be imagined. Yet that war became a defining moment in the history of Niue. From this tiny Pacific island, 150 men set out on a journey that was to take them to the other side of the world. Some did not return. Those who did were changed irrevocably. The community that waited for its sons to return was changed also. To this day it is impossible to visit the island without becoming aware that the involvement in World War I has left a legacy both of sadness, at the loss of young men, but also of pride, that Niue was prepared to be counted.

Although, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the council of chiefs had tried repeatedly to persuade Britain to extend its protection to the island of Niue, it was to New Zealand that Niue was eventually annexed in 1900. A Resident Commissioner was appointed and administration of the island was handled from Wellington. However, the British influence was strong as the London Missionary Society was well-established on Niue. The missionaries came from Britain and they ran the schools on the island, placing a strong emphasis on teaching about Britain and the Empire. Other palagi on the island were mainly traders and they too were of British stock.

The decision by the British Government to allow New Zealand to annex both Niue and the Cook Islands was a response to New Zealand support during the Boer War of 1899–1902. In New Zealand there was intense patriotic fervour and willingness to send ‘the boys’ to help Britain in South Africa. One consequence of involvement in the Boer War was to firmly establish the New Zealand tradition of amateur soldiering. It was found that volunteers with a minimum of peacetime training could enlist in times of crisis and serve under professional soldiers with considerable success. Once the war was over, these same men could return to civilian life and leave only a small group of regular soldiers in the army.

Such a concept of volunteering in wartime is different from the meaning of the word in peacetime. The only ‘voluntary’ aspect was the decision by a man to put himself forward for enlistment or enrolment in the army. If he passed the age and health regulations, he was then sworn into the army and agreed to observe and obey all orders from superiors. He could not decide to leave the army. That decision could only be made by the army authorities. He would be paid at a rate set by the government and according to his rank and he would also receive separation allowances if a wife and family were involved. The large number of men in New Zealand who had volunteered to enlist during the Boer War and at the start of the Great War meant that the government did not need to resort to the far more politically risky process of conscription – the compulsory enlistment of men by act of Parliament.

A new development in 1909 was the establishment in New Zealand of a territorial force recruited from compulsory military training. The idea was to create an adequate system of national self-defence and to enable the country to mobilise rapidly in the event of an emergency. The men balloted into the territorial force did not become regular soldiers but were required to undergo a period of military training so they could be brought into the army quickly, if required. When war was declared against Germany and other Central Powers in August 1914, New Zealand immediately offered Britain an Expeditionary Force. Volunteers were called for from the territorial force and these men were formally enlisted into the army and went into intensive training under professional officers at camps around the country. Such was the outpouring of patriotic sentiment that it seemed likely the men required to make up the Expeditionary Force would continue to come from voluntary enlistment rather than from conscription.

The difficulties with maintaining this system became apparent by mid-1915 when long casualty lists began appearing in the newspapers and badly wounded men began returning home. These men all had to be replaced, but the number of those volunteering began to wane and by August 1916 the government introduced conscription, indicating at least a partial failure of volunteering.

### **Initial Reactions on Niue**

Five weeks after the outbreak of war, a ship reached Niue carrying supplies, mail and news of the conflict between Britain and Germany. The Europeans on the island tried to convey the significance of this news to the indigenous population. The chiefs met with Togia, the Patuiki, and a message was drafted to send to England. The message began:

*To King George V, all those in authority and the brave men who fight.*

*I am the island of Niue, a small child that stands up to help the Kingdom of King George.*

This was in fact the first offer by the Niuean people to help with the war effort, the first volunteering of their services. It is reasonable to suppose that the offer to assist was spearheaded by the palagi on the island who were a product of the intense patriotism of the time. When the ship sailed after two days in port, £165 had been raised to contribute to the Red Cross Fund in New Zealand and the Resident Commissioner had prepared a written offer of troops to the government in New Zealand.

There was now a period of several months when the onset of the cyclone season meant no ships would call at Niue. With no radio link, the island was without news but the community did not sit back for there was much to be done. The Resident Commissioner, the Missionary in Charge for the LMS in Niue and the European chief police constable were all instrumental in creating, supporting and maintaining the 1<sup>st</sup> Niue Regiment. Volunteers were called for and a team of government officials visited all the villages to recruit men.

The response to this call for volunteers was mixed. Some men hid or took their families and lived in the bush until the recruiters had moved on. Other men enlisted, then withdrew their names when the story went round that 'if you go to war you die and never come back to Niue'. Others withdrew for family reasons. One native teacher preached against participation in a war on the other side of the world. Many young men were, however, keen to join and before long 200 to 250 men were involved in the training programme. This consisted principally of military drilling on the village green in Alofi and later Hakupu, an activity that held considerable appeal.

Niue's involvement in the Great War could well have ended there. At this point, the Niueans were not part of any army. The training was additional to their usual family and village activities and no payment was involved. They were in a sense a territorial force, undergoing basic training and ready for call up if necessary. In fact, comments written at the time suggest that they did 'not for a moment suppose that the offer would be accepted'.

### **Acceptance of Niue Troops**

To understand why the offer of Niuean troops was accepted, it is necessary to look at the issue of recruitment of Maori for the Expeditionary Force. There was a growing belief among young Maori leaders in New Zealand that it was essential for them to prove their loyalty and worth in order to achieve equality. What better way to prove one's loyalty than by volunteering for active service, just as so many of the young pakeha men were doing? Until 1914, the Imperial Government in London had refused to allow the use of coloured colonials



alongside or against white troops. For this reason an offer to dispatch a Native Contingent to the Boer War had not been accepted. With the outbreak of World War I, Maori MPs pressed again for the formation of a Maori Contingent. At first the British Government resisted this idea but when it was learnt that Indian troops were being sent to guard the Suez, the New Zealand government made a formal request to London for a Maori Contingent to be accepted, and the Army Council agreed.

A Native Contingent Committee was set up to oversee the selection of men for the new Maori Contingent. Like all other contingents in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, this one was to consist of men who volunteered for enlistment and they joined the army under the same terms and conditions as every other man. The committee was chaired by Maui Pomare who had been very vocal in Parliament in expressing a desire for Maori to play their part in the war effort. The first Maori Contingent of 500 men was selected from a large number of willing volunteers. It left for Egypt in early 1915 and although it was originally planned to perform garrison duties, the need for reinforcements on Gallipoli soon meant the Maori Contingent saw action.

Raising the initial body of men had been quickly accomplished but the numbers had to be sustained. As the reality of death, disease and debility sank in, the flow of recruits began to diminish. Pomare's committee suggested that the various Maori districts of New Zealand meet a certain quota, but while some areas were able to do so, others were unwilling to try. These regions were principally Taranaki and Waikato, the two areas that had suffered most from land confiscations following the wars of the 1860s. Still bitter about this, they were not prepared to now offer up their young men to fight a European war on the other side of the world.

This was particularly embarrassing for Maui Pomare as he was MP for Western Maori, that section of the North Island that comprised principally Taranaki and Waikato. Try as he might, he could not persuade his own electorate to participate. Fortunately for him, he had one other card to play. He held cabinet rank as Minister for the Cook and Other Islands and he now recalled that in the Cook Islands and Niue men were being trained and their services had been offered. The inclusion of 50 men from the Cooks and 200 from Niue would make a sizeable contribution to the third draft of reinforcements being planned to leave New Zealand in February 1916. Such was his enthusiasm for this idea that he sailed to Niue himself in October 1915 to accompany the men to New Zealand as their Commanding Officer. The acceptance of the offer of troops from Niue thus became the way round a political impasse in New Zealand and meant the men drilling on the village greens were about to embark on the longest voyage ever undertaken by Niue men.

### **Departure for War**

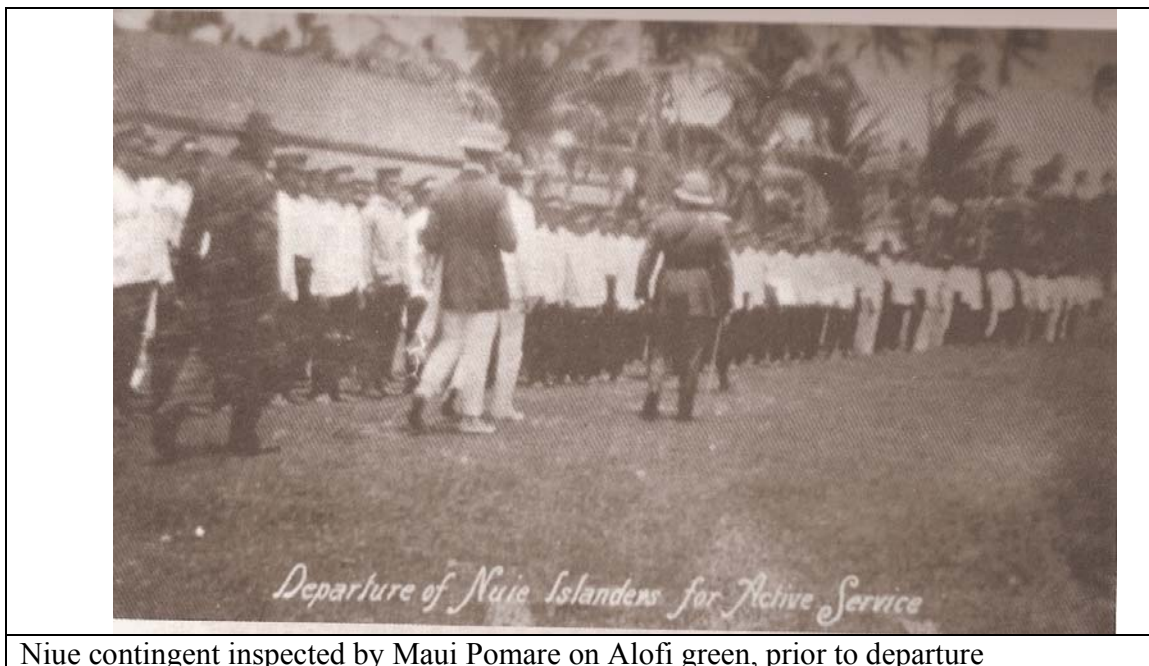
At the end of September 1915, a ship arrived in Niue with a doctor on board and the news that the Niue Regiment was to be prepared for departure. The volunteers were now to go through the official recruitment process. This involved a medical examination and then formal enlistment into the New Zealand Expeditionary Force by filling in the papers of attestation and making an oath of allegiance to King George V. When the process was complete, the man was given an army cap 'as a confirmation that he was passed and confirmed a soldier' and he was then permitted to return to his village to await the arrival of the troopship.

The call went out on 12 October 1915 when the *S.S. Te Anau* was sighted approaching the island. Messengers were dispatched to all the villages and orders given for the men to assemble in Alofi the following day. Around the island, feasts were prepared as each village farewelled its sons. The next day families accompanied their men to Alofi. A parade was held

on Alofi green and the men were inspected by Pomare. A service was then held in the Alofi church, overlooking the bay where the troopship lay at anchor. Each member of the contingent was issued a copy of the Niuean New Testament which had been printed in London and had only just arrived. Following the service there was more feasting and speechmaking and then the embarkation began.

The troopship lay half a mile offshore and crowds gathered at the point above the wharf to watch each group row out to the ship. How must they all have felt? For the 149 men who embarked, the excitement and adventure of the voyage ahead must now have been tempered by the reality of leaving their home for the first time and facing the unknown. For the families remaining, the prospect must also have been bleak. Of the 149 departing, 73 were married and 30 left behind families of one to four children. Five wives were pregnant. One family farewelled four sons and at least seven families farewelled two sons each. When the final count was found to be 149, the call went out for one further volunteer and a policeman from Alofi agreed to go. When his wife heard he had gone, she swam out to the ship and there were many tears and much sadness.

Following a rough passage to New Zealand, *S.S. Te Anau* berthed in Devonport. Waiting on the wharf were members of the small Niuean community already resident in Auckland. On the wharf the men fell in and set off marching to their new home – Narrow Neck Military Camp or Nalo Neke as it became known in Niuean. Narrow Neck was a small camp, built to hold only 400 men. This was perhaps a blessing as camps such as Trentham, with 4,500 men, held more than the population of Niue and may have been rather overwhelming.



Now that the Niueans had actually arrived in New Zealand and were officially part of the New Zealand Army, it became clear that they were going to be faced with a number of problems. The most immediate of these was that of language. It would seem that maybe 10 or 12 had some knowledge of English and these were the ones that were put in charge of small groups of men. A second problem which surfaced as soon as training commenced was that of

footwear. Having never used footwear of any kind, to don army boots then march for hours at a stretch was intensely difficult. Although boots were made especially for them, footwear continued to cause a real problem. In addition, the effect of the new diet in the army, especially the heavy emphasis on meat, was soon apparent in the sick parades. The result of sickness was a change in the normal army rations, with the Pacific Islanders being provided with more fish and fruit instead of meat.



Niue men during training at Nalo Neke

Illness resulted in five of the men being returned to Niue before Christmas. On Christmas Day 1915 tragedy struck the Niuean contingent when the first Niuean died whilst enlisted in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. The headstone in O'Neill's Point Cemetery is the first of the markers showing the journey undertaken by the Niue men.

By late January 1916, despite the very real problems experienced by the group, the men from Niue were considered ready to make the journey to Egypt to help provide much needed reinforcements for the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. A convoy of three ships was preparing to sail with a total of 1,500 troops. The farewell was planned for Friday 4 February.

Every departure of troops from New Zealand was the occasion for a military spectacle and an outpouring of patriotic fervour. A march was held up Queen Street and mounted constables were needed to clear a lane through which the soldiers could pass. What a proud moment for the Niueans – 'with bayonets fixed, and their rifles at the slope, and distinguished from the rest by wearing overcoats and helmets, they strode along the street with an expression of imperturbability...'. Following speeches and refreshments, the troops made their way to the wharf for embarkation. As the three troopships left Auckland harbour accompanied by naval vessels in a protective ring around the convoy, what thoughts must all these men have had?

### **To Egypt**

The journey to Egypt took five weeks and included a stop at Colombo where the Niueans for the first time witnessed an Asian country with its huge, bustling population. The final leg of the journey took them into the Red Sea, Tahī Kula. Arrival in the Red Sea must have been a very emotional moment for the men from Niue for here at last was a place of biblical significance that they had often heard spoken of by the pastors back in the villages.

At this point the voyage was overshadowed by an outbreak of measles on board ship and several Niueans became seriously ill. Although sickness was not confined to the Niueans,

they suffered more than most as they lacked any immunity to common palagi diseases. This meant that secondary infections were likely and were often more life-threatening. By the time the troopships docked in Suez, the second death among the Niuean group had already occurred and 15 others were transferred from the ship to the hospital in Suez.

Thus began the process of separation that was to make life even more difficult for the Niueans. While they were together they could speak Niuean and a few among them could pass on instructions or give some idea of what was happening. Once they reached Suez, the 140 men who had left New Zealand were never again all together. The men who were hospitalised and then transferred or left behind as the main body of men moved on must have felt especially displaced. The only comfort they could call on was their copy of the Niuean New Testament. No wonder many Kiwi soldiers were to comment that the Niueans seemed very religious people.

The main body of men who disembarked at Suez were sent by train to the New Zealand Base Camp at Ismailia and en route they witnessed the sights of this new country – the desert, canals flanked by date palms, the camels and donkeys, the mosques. Upon arrival they were ‘welcomed with ancient Maori ceremonial on the Egyptian desert’ and marched into camp. The third reinforcements, consisting of 125 Niueans, 112 Maoris and 45 Cook Islanders, became part of what was now known as the Pioneer Battalion, formed from the remnants of the Maori Contingent after Gallipoli. The regimental badge bore a Maori warrior’s face above a crossed pick and axe, flanked with fernleaf fronds. The pick and axe were symbolic of the work to be carried out by this group, for it was not a fighting unit but rather a labour force trained to carry out all the labouring tasks an army needed to do.

Drilling, marching, trench digging and rifle training took place in very hot, arduous conditions in the desert. Many more men began to succumb to bronchial and pulmonary infections, dysentery and enteritis. By April 1916, 52% of the Niuean contingent was hospitalised. Some recovered and rejoined the Pioneers. Others were invalided home from Suez. When the order came for the New Zealand troops to be moved from Egypt to the Western Front in the north of France, there were only 60 Niue men fit enough to travel. There had been discussion about the suitability of the European climate for the Niueans but it was felt with spring approaching they should be alright. The extremes of day and night temperatures experienced in Egypt were not kind to them and it was argued they should not be left there.

On 7 April 1916, 60 Niueans left camp in Egypt and headed for Port Said on the Mediterranean coast. Here they embarked on a transport ship and set out on a five-day voyage across the Mediterranean to Marseilles. On 14 April, the ships arrived safely in port and the men now prepared for a new theatre of war – the Western Front.

### **In France**

Arrival in France saw three more Niueans transferred to hospital with pleurisy and pneumonia. The rest were part of the great mass of New Zealand soldiers who took part in a 58-hour journey that is described in the official report in terms of the beauty of the spring countryside but which is remembered in private diaries for the cramped conditions and outbreak of disease.

In northern France, the men faced a whole new set of conditions. Route marching on the hard-metalled roads of France was quite different from the sands of Egypt and caused more foot problems. Instead of huge tent cities, the soldiers were now housed in buildings and the climatic conditions were trying with continuously cold, wet weather. The northern plains of France and Belgium lived up to their bleak, foggy reputation. Nevertheless, training was

commenced and the Pioneer Battalion was kept busy with marches, bayonet practice, gasmask practice and platoon drill. More Niueans were hospitalised but gradually the Pioneers moved closer to the Front and prepared to take over from the British Pioneers. By mid-May they were marched to Armentieres and the combat zone. Work in the trenches now began and because it was considered unsafe to move parties into and out of the trenches during daylight, the work was done at night. Trenching activity involved digging and sandbagging, transporting wooden frames in for support and placing duckwalks at the bottom. Such work was accompanied by artillery fire overhead and the constant companions of cold, mud and rats. Two more Niueans became seriously ill and died.

Late May saw the decision to withdraw the Niueans from the Western Front and send them to England prior to returning them to New Zealand. This decision appears to have been the subject of some debate, but the overriding concern was the high level of illness among them. Of the men left in Egypt, 52 had been returned to duty and were now heading for France. A decision had to be made about their deployment and the fear was further illness as they acclimatised to conditions at the Front. Hence the order was given on 25 May, as the second group was landing in Marseilles, to gather all Niueans in Etaples for marching out to England. Only 18% were to complete the round trip without being at least hospitalised.

On 5 June 1916, the Niuean troops crossed the English Channel and headed for Hornchurch in Essex. A sprinkling of men were still in hospital in Egypt or in France, some had already been transported to England by hospital ship, others had been shipped back to New Zealand. The route these men had followed through Egypt and France was marked by four Niuean headstones lying among the graves of men and women from all parts of the British Empire.

### **Hornchurch, England**

The village of Hornchurch lies 20 miles east of London. At the outbreak of the Great War, it was a village surrounded by farms and market gardens. One of the large country houses in the area, known as Grey Towers, became the base depot for the New Zealand Division and then in 1916 its role was changed to that of main New Zealand Convalescent Hospital in England.

The arrival of 102 Niuean soldiers must have created an impression on the local people. The men were weary and in many cases debilitated from illness. The language problem was still obvious. Nor did sickness stop on reaching England. Many spent time in hospital in Hornchurch and some had to be transferred to other hospitals, such was the gravity of their illness. The local people of Hornchurch seem to have taken the Niueans to their hearts. They had little notion of where Niue lay except that it was 'in the South Seas'. Visions of sun-drenched, coconut tree-clad islands no doubt helped them decide that a daily collection of fruit from the people of the village was necessary. A daily service was held for them and some translation was undertaken. It is clear the people of Hornchurch went out of their way to be kind to the Niueans, recognising that the isolation and homesickness they felt was worse than for most because of the language problem.

During this period at Hornchurch, the men were visited by a couple who had a long and warm association with the island. The Reverend and Mrs Frank Lawes had spent 42 years running the LMS church on Niue. They had retired back to London in 1910. Both were fluent in Niuean, kept in touch by mail with friends and colleagues still on Niue, and were much loved and highly thought of by the Niuean population. Mr and Mrs Lawes visited the men at Hornchurch, much to the delight of all. Mrs Lawes also visited individual Niuean soldiers isolated in different hospitals in London. She arranged for some of the men to visit London

and she showed them the principal sights so they could speak about these when they returned to their villages.

The links between Niue and Hornchurch were cemented further following the deaths of four soldiers in the village. The people of Hornchurch took care to provide appropriate services in St Andrew's church and the men were buried in the churchyard. The two headstones marking the graves of the four men have always been cared for by the locals. One man in particular has entered the folklore of the village for Private Moki of Fatiau persuaded locals that he was a Prince. The church burial register records him as 'His Highness the Prince Moki Rangitira' and notes he was 'a son of the ruling chief of the Island of Niue in the Cook Group of the South Sea Islands'. In this he was a fraud but he must have been popular as the other men went along with his story. Whatever his claim to fame, and some say it was that he had the largest feet in the whole contingent, the headstones of the men in St Andrew's churchyard represent a tangible link between the people of Hornchurch and the people of Niue. When the Commonwealth Games were held in Manchester in 2002, Niue sent a team to compete for the first time. The whole group, athletes and officials, were invited to Hornchurch and a service was held in St Andrew's church and in the adjoining graveyard. It was the first official visit by a group from Niue since 1916 and newspaper reports recorded an emotional reunion.

By mid-July 1916, the main body of Niueans had been prepared for departure to New Zealand. They were marched out of Hornchurch in two groups and embarked on the *H.T. Corinthic* in June and the *Arawa* in July. Individual Niueans were still in various hospitals but for most the last stage of the long journey had arrived, the return home to Niue-Fekai.

### **The Return Home**

The first group sailed from Southampton on the *Corinthic* on 17 June 1916, heading out into the Atlantic and down the west coast of Africa. Sickness continued to plague the Niueans and as the journey proceeded towards Capetown, five died and were buried at sea. The voyage took seven weeks with calls at Capetown and then in Hobart. Fortunately there were no further deaths but when the ship arrived in Auckland, six men were transferred to Auckland Hospital. The arrival of a troopship home was always the occasion for rejoicing, and civic and military officials gathered for a reception. For the Niuean men the most welcome sight, however, must have been the gathering of the Niueans resident in Auckland. The men were divided between convalescent homes in Devonport and Epsom to await the arrival of the second main group.

They left Southampton on 14 July 1916 and followed the same route around the Horn of Africa and into the Indian Ocean. On this ship there were mercifully no deaths and when they reached Auckland on 3 September they were met by a large crowd and addressed by the Minister of Defence. He said that he regretted the sustained hardships the Niueans had suffered but 'their action in offering their services had won the admiration of the peoples of the British Empire'.

All that remained was to find vessels to transport the men home and arrange for final pay and discharge. This was achieved by late 1916 with the exception of a few men still in hospital, two of whom died of tuberculosis and were buried in Waikumete Soldiers' Cemetery. Payment of allowances was handled by the New Zealand Resident Commissioner's office in Alofi. As there were no official birth, death and marriage records on Niue, there was an administrative problem in paying a separation allowance for a wife and children. It was decided that a list should be compiled and that the signature of the Resident Commissioner would be proof that the claim was genuine. Money was then transferred to the island and the

men and families paid at the rate of one shilling a day for a wife and sixpence a day for each child. Service medals were ordered and, although originally sent to the Cook Islands and then returned to Wellington, they did eventually reach the recipients and were worn with pride on official occasions. The return of the men was filled with emotion and relief. The arrival of a vessel was an important occasion on the island and when one arrived carrying Niuean soldiers the excitement and joy was great. One man recalled, '... when the soldiers eventually arrived home the island greeted them to a massive feast of welcome in honour of the heroes that supported Great Britain's call for volunteers'.

### **Lest We Forget**

Two years after the majority of the Niueans had returned home, peace came to Europe. When news of the Armistice reached Niue, there was much celebrating: '...besides speeches and festivities in the various villages, every person on the island will plant a coconut and these will serve as a constant reminder of the war and its significance'.

The end of the war meant that efforts to train a second contingent of men on Niue were able to be concluded without any men being sent away. The plan had been to train this group for Palestine where the Cook Islanders had been serving successfully. With peace now concluded, all training ceased and thoughts turned to the construction of a memorial to honour those who had not returned from the conflict. A memorial was constructed on the Alofi green and in 1920 a parliamentary delegation arrived from New Zealand to thank the Niueans officially for their efforts during the war. The delegation was headed by the Minister of Defence, Sir James Allen, and included members of both houses of the New Zealand Parliament. The arrival was a complete surprise but messengers were quickly dispatched to all the villages asking the returned soldiers to come to Alofi the next day. All mustered on the green in full uniform and were addressed by Sir James and presented with a captured German gun.

The men settled back in to civilian life although for some this must have been difficult. Many had continuing health problems and within five years of return another 15 men had died, mainly from pneumonia. Others lived to old age and through until the 1960s came together as a group on special occasions, proudly wearing their service medals on their white suits.

Official remembrance services on 25 April were started in 1947. The returned servicemen and their families would gather the night before. Stories were told, songs were sung and memories kept alive. Wreaths were prepared during the night for laying on the memorial the next morning. As the children and grandchildren listened, so the stories of the Niue contingent were passed to the following generations. Boasting, embellishments and the passage of time may have distorted the truth of the stories, but the essential purpose of the gathering – to remember the sacrifice and pass on the memories to succeeding generations – was achieved. ANZAC day has become firmly fixed in the island's calendar as a key event. The dawn parade, wreath laying, church service, feasting and story-telling would no doubt bring pride to the men of the Niue contingent.

### **Afterword**

Today as visitors drive around the island of Niue they will see the memorials in several of the villages that record the names of the men who went to serve in the Great War. Outside the Fale Fono in Alofi, they may pause to read the names on the Roll of Honour. Those that are on Niue on 25 April may witness the ANZAC service and watch the descendants of the Niue soldiers as they gather to pay respects and remember the contribution made by their



forefathers. These descendents are a *taoga* of Niue, a lifeline that runs from those men who sailed away in October 1915 as members of the Niue contingent down to the present population of the island. They link the past with the present just as the participation of the Niue contingent links Niue with New Zealand and with Britain. There is a shared experience, a shared suffering, a shared loss which binds these countries historically and emotionally.

In O'Neill's Point Cemetery and Waikumete Servicemen's Cemetery in Auckland, on the Memorial Gate in the Karori Cemetery in Wellington, in Commonwealth War Cemeteries in Egypt and France, and in St Andrew's churchyard in Hornchurch, England, are inscribed the names of the servicemen who did not return from that greatest voyage ever undertaken by Niue men. It is fitting that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the people of Niue and the people of New Zealand know this story and understand its significance as a defining moment not only in the history of Niue but also in the history of the relationship between our two Pacific countries.

## **Summary**

This summary sets out a response by this case study and project of pride for Niue to the research questions.

### **Niue people's world views of volunteering, the values and meaning systems that underpin these views and associated social practices**

During World War I, the New Zealand government actively encouraged the development of new regiments of Pacific men, drawn directly from the Pacific nations. Pacific men stood forward to honour their responsibilities to their families and nations before the world. The nation of Niue contributed its best – 150 men courageously volunteered themselves to support New Zealand's armed forces on the other side of the world.

When the news about the war between Britain and Germany first reached Niue villages, the *ulumotua moe tau Patu he maaga* were urged by the resident LMS Church missionary, the Resident Commissioner and the chief police constable to encourage the young men to volunteer for a Niuean regiment. Families and their young men would have respected suggestions by their *ulumotua* that they volunteer for the regiment.

### **Niue relationship responsibilities as powerful motivators**

The New Zealand Minister of Parliament for Western Maori, Maui Pomare, who was also Cabinet Minister for the Cook and Other Islands, recalled that the Cook Islands and Niue, which had made financial contributions to the New Zealand war effort, also offered soldiers. In a tight corner with falling numbers of volunteers in New Zealand, including amongst Maori, he enthusiastically travelled to Niue to expedite the recruitment of the Niue Regiment.

For the nation of Niue, the visit of Maui Pomare, as a Maori, as a Minister of State and as Commanding Officer for the newly formed regiment, carried relational, cultural and political imperatives that were strengthened by his face-to-face presence in Niue. These imperatives combined with the Niuean sense of honour heightened their responsibility and obligation to fulfill their roles as young men. Based on their Niuean values, the volunteering of an entire regiment of Niuean men was assured.

### **Contributions and their recognition**

In preparation, the Niuean people regularly gathered on the communal village green to support the training, marching and drilling that quickly gained acceptance amongst them as an activity that was related to family and village responsibilities for the men. Families must have



re-organised their subsistence economy activities in order to free men to contribute their time and energy to the marching and drilling practices.

Wives received a separation allowance of one shilling a day and children sixpence per day while the Niue regiment men were away.

### **Concepts that capture the nature of volunteering and the fulfillment of cultural obligations from this project**

Importantly, Margaret Pointer identifies that the wartime concept of ‘volunteering’ is different to its peacetime meaning. New Zealand as a society that promoted the rights of individuals to exercise their ‘free will and choice’ suspended the usual norms of volunteering for the armed forces during 1916 in order to maintain troop numbers. While conscription was never extended to the Island Territories, the motivation for Niue and other Pacific nations to assist during a time of vulnerability was a matter of honour.

New Zealand’s eager pursuit of the fulfillment of Niue’s offer, as represented by the actions of Maui Pomare, indicates that for Niue being a distant spectator was never an option. The regiment was quickly prepared and transported to the war despite the New Zealanders knowing the physical impacts of colder climates, dietary changes, footwear difficulties and language realities. All of these combined to intensify the risks being taken with the Niuean regiment owing to their low immunity to new diseases.

Through the Niuean regiment, the nation honoured its responsibility to New Zealand with the lives of many of its young men. An acknowledgement of this contribution is important.

### **Some impacts on the Niuean peoples and their families**

The departure of 150 men from Niue had a deep impact. For some families it was ‘like someone had died’.<sup>12</sup> Their departure for New Zealand was followed by a prolonged period of what was commonly experienced as grieving, except that it extended far beyond the 10-day period customary for Niuean people after a death. For some families, children had died at birth or as babies while the men were away and they returned to be shocked by the death of their children. Some families were so severely disrupted through the absence of the male parent that familiar households had split up and they returned to find their children being cared for by a range of extended family members.<sup>13</sup>

The nation of Niue mourned the loss of 16 important young men from their families, their genealogies, their community and national future. Within five years of their return, another 15 men had died from continuing health problems. The impacts for men who returned were noticeable to their families. Many are remembered as silent and serious men who did not find it easy to speak about their experiences.<sup>14</sup>

The losses are remembered by Niuean elders as immense physically, emotionally, economically, culturally and spiritually for both the men who volunteered and for the families and the dual nations that they went to war to honour. This case study as a project of pride acknowledges honours and remembers their contributions.

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<sup>12</sup> From a conversation with W. Ranfurly, June 2006.

<sup>13</sup> From a conversation with W. Ranfurly.

<sup>14</sup> From a conversation with W. Ranfurly.

# WELLINGTON TONGAN COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARY EXHIBITION: SIU KI MOANA: REACHING ACROSS THE PACIFIC – A TONGAN PROJECT OF PRIDE

*Dr Tracie Mafile’o and Tanusiakihelotu*

## **Acknowledgements**

Acknowledgement and thanks to the members of the Wellington Tongan community who gave their all to the *Siu ki Moana* exhibition. Thanks particularly to the leaders who shared their reflections on the Tongan community’s contributions: Tanusia-kihe-lotu (Taniela Vao), Kolovula Murphy and Toa Helu.

From the National Library, we thank Susan Bartel, Public Relations Manager, Alexander Turnbull Library, and Peter Ireland, Exhibitions Manager, who respectively provided copies of photos and excerpts from the visitors’ book for this case study.

We acknowledge Princess Lātūfuipeka as guest of honour for the opening of the *Siu ki Moana* exhibition, the opening speech of which is reproduced in this report. Acknowledgement must also be given to Lois Webster who took the initiative and engaged the Wellington Tongan community in the journey of this exhibition.

‘Oku ou fakamalo ’aupito kiate kimoutolu hono kotoa ’i he loto hounga’ia mo e faka’apa’apa mo’oni.

Dr Tracie Mafile’o

## **Introduction**

This narrative centres on the Tongan Wellington community’s contribution to the *Siu ki Moana: Reaching across the Pacific* exhibition at the National Library, Wellington, from 19 November 2005 to 19 March 2006. The exhibition featured photographs, documents and artefacts portraying the relationship between Aotearoa New Zealand and the Kingdom of Tonga during the period 1880 to 1950. In partnership with the National Library, there were four ‘Tongan days’ as part of the exhibition, in which the Wellington Tongan community demonstrated aspects of Tongan arts and culture including tufunga tātongitongi (woodcarving), koka’anga (tapa-making), lālanga (weaving) and faiva (performance arts). An important aspect of the Wellington Tongan community’s contribution to *Siu ki Moana* was hosting the Honourable Angelika Lātūfuipeka Halaevalu Mata’aho Napua ‘O-ka-lani Tuku’aho, a Tongan princess, the guest of honour at the opening of the exhibition.

The narrative begins with the speech delivered by the Princess at the opening of the *Siu ki Moana* exhibition. The speech gives an overview of the historical relationship between Aotearoa New Zealand and the Kingdom of Tonga. The core sections of the report discuss: the genealogy of the *Siu ki Moana* project; the vision which underpinned the Tongan community’s contribution to *Siu ki Moana*; the nature of the contributions by, and impact on, various sectors of the Tongan community; and the likely future of the project. The concluding comments offer critical reflection on the *Siu ki Moana* project in relation to diasporic Tongan

community development and Tongan ngāue 'ofa (voluntary work) and faifatongia (cultural obligations) more generally.

**Speech Delivered at the Opening of *Siu ki Moana*, Honourable Angelika Lātūfuipeka Halaevalu Mata'aho Napua 'O-ka-lani Tuku'aho<sup>15</sup>**

I am most honoured to have been invited to open this exquisite and enlightening exhibition, *Siu ki Moana*, and to see so many friendly faces. I was born here and I am always happy to visit Aotearoa/New Zealand and to strengthen the long-established links between our two countries.

This important occasion provides a crucial opportunity for our people to reflect on the consolidation of vital relations which have been nurtured and developed over a 70-year period.

Tongans and Maori are Polynesian peoples, but they did not meet until recent times. Polynesians migrated from southeast Asia via Melanesia about 3,500 years ago. Those who remained in Western Polynesia became Tongans and Samoans. Other Polynesians who had originally settled in Eastern Polynesia came in groups to Aotearoa and are now known as Maori.

Various European explorers touched both Tonga and Aotearoa/New Zealand in the 17th century, but Captain James Cook was the first real link between the two countries, both of which Cook visited on all three of his voyages into the Pacific in the 1770s. The difference in the two cultures (and climates!) is demonstrated by the differences in the gifts the Maori and Tongan chiefs gave Cook and his officers in exchange for European tools and artefacts. To Europe, in the holds of Cook's ships, went dozens of Maori cloaks, a large number of ornaments and intricately carved objects – the artistry of which still amazes those who see them. Aotearoa/New Zealand had many types of trees, as well as whalebone and greenstone for carving useful and decorative objects. Tongans made the best use of what they had, especially coconut trees that grew profusely in their tropical climate. Thus there were also objects such as intricately woven mosikaka baskets, similar to the one once owned by our beloved Queen Salote, which is now in the Tonga National Museum. Like the Maori, Tongans made fishing hooks, necklaces and weapons, some of which (like the Maori artefacts) ended up in museums throughout Europe.

The most important of the gifts that Cook and his officers gave in exchange were tools of different kinds, which did not immediately replace local tools, but the style, delicacy and patterns of wooden carvings in particular were affected by the acquisition of European technology.

**Contact between Tonga and New Zealand**

Between the three voyages of Captain Cook and 1880, the year with which this exhibition begins, Maori and Tongans came to know of each other's existence, knowledge that possibly confirmed their legends about other Polynesian people, through Christianity, official visits, education, the two World Wars, trade, employment and the acquisition of the government property at 'Atalanga.

In 1880, Tupou I appointed Shirley Waldemar Baker (a former missionary) as Prime Minister of Tonga. Five years later they founded the Free Church of Tonga, seceding from the Wesleyan Mission. Its first President was a New Zealander, Rev. Jabez Bunting Watkin, who

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<sup>15</sup>Retrieved from <http://decisionmaker.co.nz/quarterlies/pacificcitizens/Tonga%20NZ%201950/histtonga1950.html> on 14 April 2006.

held that position for 40 years. Some of his children married Tongans and use the surname Uatikini.

In the late 1880s, Tupou I's great-grandson Prince Taufa'ahau (later Tupou II) spent some months with a private tutor in Auckland. As King, Tupou II made a number of visits to New Zealand, seeking legal assistance in connection with the Treaty and Agreement with Great Britain that he had unwillingly signed in 1900 and 1905. R.N. Moody, an Auckland lawyer, became Tupou II's legal adviser.

The beginning of the 20th century was marked by the establishment of official contact between the two countries when R.J. Seddon, Prime Minister of New Zealand, his family, and an official party (including New Zealand parliamentarians) visited Tonga during 1900, where he met a Maori, Peter Maynard, who married a Tongan woman and had lived in Tonga for many years. After this visit an increasing number of New Zealanders came to work for the Government of Tonga or to set up as traders, although the numbers declined during World War I and the Great Depression of the 1930s.

In 1909, Princess Salote (then aged 9 years) arrived in Auckland to live with a family named Kronfield in Eden Crescent, Auckland, and subsequently attended as a boarder the Anglican Diocesan School for Girls (there being no Methodist boarding school in Auckland at the time). Later she regretted that her education was cut short at the end of 1914 because of World War I.

In 1918, she was crowned as Queen of Tonga. In 1922, she visited New Zealand where the Waikato Maori greeted her as Polynesian royalty, and a well-known photograph was taken of Salote dressed in a Maori cloak and head-band, together with the Maori King, the Governor General, and some of the Tongans of her own party.

The acknowledgement of the relationship between the Maori and Tongans was repeated in every subsequent visit of the Queen. Te Puea Herangi and Princess Piki were special guests at the double wedding of Her Majesty's sons in June 1947. When Queen Salote was in Paris in 1953, some Maori friends brought food to the hotel where Salote and her party were staying.

Rev. Edwin Harkness came from New Zealand to serve in the Free Church of Tonga for about 10 years, until 1922. After J.B. Watkin's death in 1925, another New Zealander Rev. Robert Gordan-Kirgan was President of the Free Church from 1927 until about 1930. In 1954, the New Zealand Catholic Bishop Rodgers succeeded the French Bishop Blanc.

In 1926, New Zealand was represented at the centenary of the coming of Christianity to Tonga. In 1933, Lord Bledisloe, Governor General of New Zealand, made an official visit; and other governors-general visited Tonga: Sir Cyril Newall in 1942 and Lord Galway in 1943 and 1944.

Between the wars, some Tongans came to New Zealand for education or to live, many of whom attended Wesley College, such as the retired Prime Minister Baron Vaea. Most had a papālangi Tongan mother. Gloria Rawlinson, the poet, who was born in Ha'apai in 1918, was brought to New Zealand in 1924. In 1938, Queen Salote's youngest son came to study with a private tutor.

In 1939, Queen Salote called for volunteers to join the Tonga Defence Force. Two New Zealand officers arrived in Tonga to train the volunteers. More officers and other ranks followed. Indeed, there was a New Zealand presence in Tonga throughout the War. Some Tongans were sent to Aotearoa/New Zealand to be trained as officers. 'Alipate Tupou, appointed to the noble title of Vaea in 1942, joined the Royal New Zealand Air Force ferrying supplies in Catalina planes from New Zealand to the Solomons. As may be expected, many

friendships were formed between Tongans and New Zealanders during the War – and some marriages occurred.

### **Educational and Other Links**

Queen Salote was a great believer in education – for both boys and girls. She had sent her half-sister, Princess Fusipala, to attend the Anglican Diocesan School for Girls in Epsom 1921–1924. Her Majesty Queen Halaevalu Mata’aho attended St Mary’s convent school in Auckland. If the parents could not afford boarding school fees, Queen Salote would write to the General Secretary of the Methodist Board of Missions in New Zealand asking if he could arrange accommodation for the Tongan girls with good Methodist families.

Good copra prices during and after the War enabled families to educate their children overseas, initially for secondary education followed by academic as well as technical tertiary education. The appointment of Prince Tupouto’a-Tungi (now His Majesty) as Minister of Education in 1943 led to an increasing number of Tonga government scholarships for overseas study and the consequent assumption of important positions in government, education and the churches by New Zealand-educated Tongans. The New Zealand government acceded to Prince Tupouto’a-Tungi’s request for New Zealand teachers to come to teach in Tongan government schools for a minimum of two years without losing any of their New Zealand benefits.

In 1952, the Government of Tonga bought ‘Atalanga, a house surrounded by nearly 40 acres, in Epsom. Queen Salote used this property not only for members of the royal family but also as a centre for all Tongans. She built hostels for Tongan female and male students in Auckland. By gathering Tongans at ‘Atalanga, she ensured that they did not forget their Tongan roots and also kept a close eye on their progress, and wanted to know why if a student did not do well.

Although no one was more conscious of rank and hierarchy when in Tonga, Queen Salote was inclusive in her social contacts in New Zealand. Her Maori friends, academics, representatives of churches, politicians, former papālangi residents of Tonga, and friends from her schooldays joined with the members of the Epsom Methodist church at Greenwood’s Corner (where the Queen was a regular attendee) for afternoon tea and garden parties at ‘Atalanga.

It is not surprising that there was a Tongan community in Auckland to keep vigil for the Queen when she was lying in state in Government House in December 1965 before being taken home for burial in Tonga. The Waikato people also came to tangi for her and thousands of distinguished and ordinary New Zealanders came to pay their respects.

### **Conclusion**

Although this exhibition covers the period up to 1950, I want to acknowledge the New Zealand volunteers who have since come as teachers and aid workers. This gesture of commonality between two countries led to many friendships. For many Tongans, Aotearoa/New Zealand became their second home. For many New Zealanders, Tonga became their second home.

An increasing number of Tongans now living in Aotearoa/New Zealand were born here, and think of themselves as Tongan New Zealanders. They have contributed to this country as labourers, health care and community workers, sportsmen, educators, artists, musicians and entertainers. Some have contributed enormously to the churches in New Zealand as priests, ministers and lay people. Many of these settlers manage to visit Tonga

from time to time for anniversaries and funerals, but their real home is now Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Through all these interactions, Tongans and New Zealanders have come to know each other well and both Aotearoa/New Zealand and Tonga have benefited from these contacts. And now it gives me immense pleasure and pride to declare open the *Siu ki Moana* Exhibition.

### **The Vision of *Siu ki Moana***

The curator of the exhibition, Lois Webster, explains that the phrase *Siu ki Moana*:

... is often used in the context of fishermen going out to the open ocean, beyond the lagoons and reefs, in search of the big catch, and it is used to describe the sea bird's flight from island to distant island. Venturing out into deep water, of course, comes with risks. One may meet great difficulty; one may never return. Yet the long stretches of the South Pacific ocean have for centuries lured traders, adventurers, scientists, sailors, defenders and lovers. It is the yearning for that distant shore – always looking backward, always looking forward to the world that awaits them at the other end of the ocean's swell – that is celebrated in this exhibition.<sup>16</sup>

The project name, *Siu ki Moana*, has links to other Tongan phrases. For example, the phrase *siu-mafua-'uta* literally translates as fishing (*siu*) for food (*mafua*) on land (*'uta*). *Mafua* refers to the small fish which flock together, that is, a shoal of fish which provide food for bigger fish, for birds and for fishermen. *Manu siu* refers to a bird which hunts for fish, and also refers to a fisherman who goes fishing. In poetry the phrase *manu siu* refers to a man who looks for a woman in courtship. The phrase *Siu ki Moana*, therefore, is both literal and metaphoric in its application.

The vision of this project emerges from a backdrop of intensifying Tongan and *papālangi* engagement within a globalised context. *Hau'ofa* (1994) explains that Tongans and Pacific peoples were traditionally migratory peoples, navigating the ocean. The sea, therefore, does not separate the islands of the Pacific, but rather connects them. Travelling over the ocean is a means by which strategic relationships are forged, new understandings are negotiated and wellbeing is achieved. Contemporary Tongan navigation, migration and transnationalism constitutes a continuation of Tongan endeavours to resource and develop families and communities. Multi-directional flows of people, money, food, mats, culture and so on demonstrate Tongan values of *tauhi vā* (maintaining reciprocal relationships), *'ofa* (love) and *fetokoni'aki* (mutual helpfulness) (Evans, 2001; van der Grijp, 2004).

The use of the metaphor, *Siu ki Moana*, alerts one to the journey of Tongan peoples to New Zealand – journeys which are often characterised by risk. For the Wellington Tongan community, *Siu ki Moana* provided an opportunity to acknowledge our Tongan forbears who laid the foundation for Aotearoa New Zealand and Tonga connections. The 2001 Census indicated that there are over 40,000 people of Tongan ethnicity in New Zealand; this compares to a Tongan population of about 100,000 in Tonga. It was an opportunity to contribute to, and be agents of, history. Put another way, part of the vision of *Siu ki Moana*

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<sup>16</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.natlib.govt.nz/bin/media/pr?item=1131317631> on 14 April 2006.

was that Tongan participation would be harnessed, to bring a Tongan voice to the interpretation of that particular history; but also to inhabit a connection between that history, the present moment, and the future of the Tongan and New Zealand relationship.

Thus, there was an educative aspect to the vision of *Siu ki Moana*. The exhibition allowed New Zealanders, and importantly Tongans in New Zealand, to learn something of the history which brought us to this point, and place, in time. *Siu ki Moana* makes our Tongan stories available for future generations of New Zealand-born Tongans so that they can learn:

*'about the richness of our culture and to live it and to use it in their everyday lives ... to enrich them and grow with it.'*

### **Exploring the Genealogy of *Siu ki Moana***

*Siu ki Moana* was originally exhibited at Auckland City Public Library on Lorne Street from 28 March to 16 April 2002, although it was smaller scale than the Wellington exhibition. Lois Webster (personal communication, April 2006), the curator of the exhibition, gave the following account of the first *Siu ki Moana* exhibition:

The cost of the exhibition was mainly voluntary with a small grant from the Auckland City Council ... Advertisements were arranged by the Auckland Public Library ... Volunteers who worked very hard on the project were: Saiatua Lavulo who was my mentor; my son, Timothy Webster, who did the installing and design of the existing space in the library and the digitised images and refinement of images; and framing was done by a graphic designer, Hamish Macdonald. The exhibition opened with a prayer in Tongan by Saiatua and a prayer in Maori by Nola Paki Hettig (a Maori woman from Kawhai who had married a Tongan, Sione Hettig in the late 1940s). These prayers were followed by songs, one in Maori and one in Tongan, followed by a ma'ulu'ulu by the women of an Auckland-based group of 'Langafonua a Fafine Tonga i Aotearoa'. It was a small gathering of about 60 people. In attendance were several representatives from the families depicted in the pre-1950s images: members of the Tongan families of Meanata, Tu'inukuafe, Vete and of pālangi families who had lived in Tonga in those days: Denney, Cocker, Richelmann and Whitcombe. There were ngatu-making demonstrations held each Tuesday in the foyer of the library for the duration of the exhibition.

From one point of view, the project began within the mainstream New Zealand historical, arts and cultural domain. A large amount of the photographic and documentary material was sourced from the Alexander Turnbull Library and other libraries and museums. From a broader view, however, the genealogy of the project can be found in the experiences of Tongan navigation and migration, and the willingness of Tongan community leaders in Wellington to contribute to and celebrate the New Zealand-Tongan connection. Importantly, it is perhaps the merging of these two beginning points which more truly depicts the genealogy of *Siu ki Moana*.

Lois Webster approached the National Library and Peter Ireland, the Exhibition Manager, was the key organiser at the National Library. A Tongan member of staff at the National Library, Mrs Toa Helu, however, was the initial pathway through which the Wellington Tongan community was engaged to participate. Toa Helu's position at the library is that of Senior Accountant Officer. She comments:

I'm the only Tongan here at the Library ... I can't say no to do the contact with the community because I'm the only Tongan ... and I want to commit to it and do my best and make this exhibition successful.

She undertook a liaison role, explaining aspects of Tongan culture to the library staff as part of the lead-up to the exhibition and facilitating the development of a connection between the Wellington Tongan community and the National Library.

Toa Helu recognised that her primary associations with the Tongan community were through her church, the Wesley Methodist Church. She therefore made contact with Tanusia-kihe-lotu (Taniela Vao), a matapule and community leader, in order to elicit wider involvement. Plans were made to hold a meeting with Tongan church and community leaders at the National Library. Although the invitation was widely circulated, there were only a few who came to the first couple of meetings. By the second meeting it was confirmed that Princess Nanasipu'u Tuku'aho would be invited to the opening of the *Siu ki Moana* exhibition. The announcement that a member of the royal family was to be the guest of honour was the key in rallying a wider degree of support and involvement from the Wellington Tongan community. The invitation was in fact accepted by Princess Nanasipu'u, although it was advised later that her daughter, Princess Lātūfuipeka, would attend on her behalf.

The decision to invite the Princess as the guest of honour arose when the Curator showed Wellington Tongan leaders the photos that were to be displayed as part of *Siu ki Moana*. The photos were mostly of members of the royal family, reflecting the fact that during the period 1880 to 1950 it was primarily the royal family who came to study in New Zealand. This also reflected the essentially colonial role of New Zealand in the Pacific over this time.

## **Ngāue 'Ofa and Faifatongia (Voluntary Work and Cultural Obligations)**

There are three components comprising this exploration of the contributions of the Wellington Tongan community to the *Siu ki Moana: Reaching across the Pacific* exhibition. The first part describes the kinds and levels of contributions, whether voluntary or non-voluntary, which enabled the success of the *Siu ki Moana* project. Second, the cultural values and beliefs that drove and underpinned Tongan community involvement in *Siu ki Moana* are discussed. Finally, the impacts of the voluntary activity and the project on various sectors of the Pacific and New Zealand communities are examined.

### **Kinds of Ngāue 'Ofa and Faifatongia**

The contributions of the Wellington Tongan community were significantly shaped by the preparations required to receive a member of the Tongan royal family as a guest of honour for the opening of *Siu ki Moana*. The preparations were in relation to accommodation, transport, travel itinerary, food and hospitality, cultural performances and entertainment, a kava ceremony and a church service (see Appendix One, Photographs).

While the National Library had a budget for the exhibition, the non-monetary contributions provided by the Wellington Tongan community included time, knowledge, skills and material resources, ranging from cultural expertise, community leadership and event management to cultural performance, manual labour, food preparation and the provision of Tongan artefacts for the exhibition. But more than this, it was the spirit of ngāue 'ofa with



which the contributions were made that brought richness to the event. As explained by one of the leaders:

*'We don't look at our heads to see what we have got to do – we just plan it, do it, and do it from the heart.'*

Contributions were made by children and young people in a range of ways. For example, children who are around when food is being prepared are made useful ('aonga) by being given errands to run. Young people were specifically involved in the faiva (cultural performances). Sometimes special roles would be assigned to children or young people – for example, an 11-year old girl presented flowers to the Princess. At other times, people would be drawn in to assist because their family member had a particular responsibility. An example of this was that a community leader borrowed money from her adult children in order to buy produce, for which she would later be reimbursed. Such contributions demonstrate the strength of kainga (extended family) and values of collectivity and fetokoni'aki (mutual helpfulness).

While it is not possible to be precise about the hours involved, the time component gives some indication of the nature of ngaue 'ofa and faifatongia within this project. The meetings in preparation for the event began several months prior to the opening. Weekly practices for cultural performances took place on the weekends, over a period of three months. Some of the community leaders took one or two days off work at the time of the opening event and many of those involved in food preparation did not sleep the night before the event in order to prepare the range of Tongan cuisine which is an important part of such special occasions.

### **Talitali 'Ilo Mo E Ma'u Me'atokoni: Cuisine and Hospitality**

The opening of *Siu ki Moana* catered for 400 people. The food preparation was delegated to one particular Tongan church, the Tokaikolo-'ia-Kalaisi church, and within that congregation six families were given cooking responsibilities, which they did in their homes. There were particular foods, for example, taro leaves, that were sent by freight from Auckland. In order to prepare a special table for the Princess, specialty foods such as crayfish and puaka tunu (roast suckling pigs) were required. In relation to the traditional importance of food, Tanusia-kihe-lotu says:

*'Food was traditionally crucial to living in Tonga, as life pre-European contact was dependent on the mercy of nature. That is, droughts, hurricanes, floods and seasons impacted on the land, and winds and waves impacted the ocean. Hence food was the most valuable commodity that anyone could give to show warmth in the heart, to welcome or show gratitude. Food was central to the most famous annual festival of the Tu'i Tonga (the Tongan King), the 'inasi (presentation of the first fruits), in which all the provinces and colonies of the Tu'i Tonga Empire presented their first fruits to the Tu'i Tonga.'*

The Wellington Tongan community's ngaue 'ofa and faifatongia, with the preparation of Tongan cuisine for the opening of *Siu ki Moana* and Princess Lātūfuipeka, demonstrate a Tongan cultural understanding of respect, gratitude and welcome.

### **Faiva: Cultural Performances**

At the beginning of the ceremony when the guest of honour, the Princess Lātūfuipeka, arrived at the exhibition, the Tongan national anthem was sung and then the New Zealand national anthem was sung in Maori and English.

There was a range of faiva (cultural dances) performed at the opening and closing of the exhibition. Responsibility for particular performances was delegated to particular church groups. Tanusia-kihe-lotu gives the following accounts of the faiva:

- A floorshow style (multi-items) performance (Avalon Tongan Methodist Fellowship) – There were about 20 performers, with ages ranging from five to late twenties, half males and half females. The dances included mako (men), 'otuhaka (women), ula (women), lakalaka (men and women), tau'olunga (solo female dance) and kailao (men). The kailao is a war dance performed by about eight young men between the ages of 13 and 25 years old. They wore shorts with manafau (skirt of loose strands of fau bark which goes from the waist to the kneecap). The rhythm was provided by two male drummers to create the sense of excitement.
- Ma'ulu'ulu (Wellington Tongan Roman Catholic Church combined performance) – This was a dance involving both men and women in which the performers were seated on the ground. There was accompaniment of singers and two drummers beating in rhythmic pattern. There were about 50 participating in total and their ages ranged from 7 to over 70 years old. There was also one Tongan priest and a nun who participated in the ma'ulu'ulu. Their costumes were a white tupenu and ta'ovala lokeha with a sisi (waistband), vesa (wristband) and kahoia (necklace) all made of fresh green foliage.
- Tau'olunga (Tokaikolo-'i-Kalaisi Church) – A solo dance was performed first by a young female and then a second dance was performed by four young women in their early twenties. The tau'olunga is a dance for young virgin women. Their costumes were specially made with fine mats, and they were adorned with jewels and oil. The tau'olunga is significant as a dance genre which demonstrates the concept of beauty and elegance in form and the embodiment of Tongan femininity expressed in faiva (performance art). Such performance is the consummating expression of all the best elements of costume, music, poetry and performance (including the purity of the performer). Hence, this is an enthralling scene of paradisaical bliss to behold and enjoy, which is so inspiring to the heart and refreshing to the mind.

### **'Ilokava Fakamuifonua: Kava Ceremony**

The kava ceremony at the *Siu ki Moana* opening was 'ilokava fakamuifonua, a ceremony for chiefs from the present Tu'i Kanokupolu dynasty. This ceremony contains some elements of 'ilokava, the kava ceremony for chiefs, and some elements from the milolua, the kava ceremony held only for the King. Preparations before the ceremony included obtaining the kava and sugar cane for the ceremony. Several telephone calls were made to Tonga and Auckland by Tanusia-kihe-lotu and it was decided that the supply of sugar cane from Auckland would be adequate as the fono (food given to participants) for the 'ilokava.

According to Tongan legend the kava plant first grew simultaneously with the sugar cane. The story goes that a couple's daughter named Kava was infected by leprosy and lived on the island of 'Eueiki. The king visited the island while he was on a fishing trip (siu), and because the couple did not have anything to offer to the king, they killed their only daughter to present as a gift to the king. The king heard about this and consequently did not want to eat the gift because he took pity on the couple since the only thing they could offer was their daughter. They buried the daughter and over time a kava plant grew from the head and sugar cane from the feet. So when the kava drink is served, its ceremonial fono (food) is the sugar

cane which is distributed to the participants in the kava ceremony. In turn, the fono of the participants is collected by a relative who is 'eiki (superior) in relation to the participant.

In preparation for the *Siu ki Moana* opening, decisions were made about who would be involved in the kava ceremony. There were two to three assistants, the young women serving the kava, and the kava mixer. The contributions required as part of the 'ilokava fakamuifonua include specific Tongan cultural knowledge, so that there are appropriate people in particular roles, whether they be seated in the kava circle, serving the kava or receiving the fono. Those sitting in the kava circle included the CEO of the Library, the Maori manager and a Matapule from Tonga. Traditionally, the roles in such a kava ceremony are inherited. The process of the ceremony reveals the connections between people seated in the circle and those who might serve the kava and receive the fono. The kava ceremony is done in honour of the Princess as the 'Olovaha (guest of honour), hence the matapule who conducted the ceremony called out a name of an inferior cousin of the Princess to be the one in whom the matapule would drink his kava (inu'anga-kava). When the fono is distributed to the participants in the kava ceremony, the fono is collected by a superior or 'eiki relative (kai-fono) of the participants. The honour of picking up the fono of the Princess was given to Susan Bartel, the Public Relations Manager for the exhibition. In the case of royalty, it is appropriate for a non-Tongan to act as kai-fono since a Tongan would be susceptible to a curse if they broke this social tapu: no one in the Tongan community was socially superior to the Princess.

There is an exactness of skill required involving tone of voice, posture and movement on the part of those involved in performing the ceremony. For example, the kava mixer is required to call out to the matapule (who conducts the ceremony role), 'ko e kava e na'e tuki' meaning 'this is the kava which has been pounded' while tilting forward the bowl with the pounded kava inside. As part of an interchange, the matapule then responds by giving the command 'tuku atu', meaning to put the bowl back to a level position. A further command is given, 'Tukutuku malie pe kae palu', which is a command by the matapule to the kava mixer to 'put things slowly and carefully in order' and then to start mixing the kava.

### **Tufunga Tātongitongi (Wood-carving), Koka'anga (Tapa-making) and Lālanga (Weaving)**

The Tongan days involved Tongan experts demonstrating particular Tongan art forms:

- Tufunga tātongitongi (wood-carving) was organised by 'Uvea Fa'apoi, a painter who also exhibited some of his paintings.
- Koka'anga (tapa-making) was demonstrated by a women's group from Avalon Methodist Tongan Fellowship and was organised by Senorita Laukau.
- Lālanga (weaving) was organised by Kolovula Murphy with her women's group from Tokaikolo-'ia-Kalaisi Church.

### **Lotu Fakafeta'i Mo E Fe'iloaki Me Pilinisesi Lātūfuipeka: Church Service and Meeting with the Princess**

On the Sunday following the opening of *Siu ki Moana*, the Wellington Tongan community held a special thanksgiving programme, in honour of the Princess, but also to thank God for the togetherness brought about by the *Siu ki Moana* exhibition opening.

The church service reflected the place of faith (in particular, Christian faith) in the nature of the contributions made by the Wellington Tongan community. Toa Helu spoke of this as follows:

*'There are so many barriers that we had to go through ... There [is] lots of sacrifice, time and effort ... And that's one thing I asked before our meeting with the Tongan community, just to pray for this exhibition ... we can't do much but to pray.'*

### **Tongan Cultural Values and Beliefs Underpinning Ngāue 'Ofa and Faifatongia**

The meaning behind the community contribution was explained by Tanusia-kihe-lotu in his remark:

*'When you invite a princess or a royalty, he or she is part of you.'*

This comment points to the encompassing nature of 'eiki (higher status) in relation to tu'a (lower status) in a Tongan context. The higher status, or 'eiki position, encompasses the tu'a position – the two are mutually exclusive and complementary in nature (James, 1995). The Wellington Tongan community contribution shows their recognition that the Princess is integrally part of their history, roots and ancestry. Referring to fulfilling obligations, Tanusia-kihe-lotu declares that, in living the expectations of our ancestors,

*'... it's very warming and very touching to many Tongans ... They are royalty, we are commoners, but we are proud to be commoners and they are there because of us and it's a reciprocal relationship and it's living.'*

The people of Kolovai, the village of Ata, the father of the Princess, gave fine mats and a gift of money to Princess Lātūfuipeka. This was not a planned part of the *Siu ki Moana* project, but was a Tongan community response demonstrating tauhi vā or tauhi 'eiki (keeping the reciprocal obligation and relationships to the 'eiki, chief/noble). This was a response 'from the heart' and could be understood as being motivated by faka'apa'apa (respect) and 'ofa (love). Belief in the value of belonging together and wishing to be together, fie kaufakataha, is also implicit in the contributions of the Wellington Tongan community.

In many senses, the Tongan community contributions epitomise the dynamic and negotiated nature of culture. The most pointed example of this was the decision to carry out a kava ceremony as part of the occasion of the opening ceremony. On the one hand, kava ceremonies are not typically held at such openings in Tonga. On the other hand, as one leader pointed out, given that we are in a 'foreign land', the kava is an ideal way to demonstrate and uphold Tongan values:

*'Kava can speak in so many ways; and when it's performed its meaning conveys our Tongan [culture].'*

The slow, careful movements involved in mixing the kava are themselves an art form and, according to Professor Futa Helu (Lecture on Tongan Culture and Tradition, Atenisi University, 1975), are illustrative of Tongan culture and society. That is, the traditional operation of Tongan society controls and maintains the status quo (Tanusia-kihe-lotu).

The negotiation and expression of Tongan culture within a New Zealand context can be a point of conflict. While there may be agreement about key values, how these translate within this context is something that is often negotiated. As pointed out by Tanusi-kihe-lotu:

*'Conflict is part of survival in social situations but it needs purpose in order to lead to a rewarding outcome or change. When there is no continuity of underlying values, migrating to a new environment such as New Zealand can bring about a dislocation of the social, cultural, mental and emotional make-up, leading to confusion and apathy.'*

However, it was also noted:

*'Every king has added or changed something to the kava ceremony as it passes down. If we go traditional we have to sit down with green kava and chew it and ... drink it with coconut leaves. What I believe is that we are the appropriate people at that time and space to do it ... Things change over time, to modify things according to the environment.'*

Therefore, a belief underpinning the Tongan community's contributions is that Tongan culture ought to be upheld, but also that there are aspects that can be adapted over time in a New Zealand context while upholding the core values.

The balancing of faka'aki'akimui (modesty) and polepole/laukau (pride/to look one's best) was important to the way in which contributions were made. For example, someone who serves the kava should be modest in appearance (that is, they have a simple hair style and do not wear elaborate jewellery). This shows faka'apa'apa (respect) and fakatōkilalo (humility). As one leader elaborated:

*'The idea of relationship in Tonga [is that] I have to praise you and put me down. And in return, you praise me and put you down. It enhances the relationship, it reflects our respect to each other.'*

Such modesty is construed as a strength:

*'[Modesty and pride] have to be managed to work harmoniously – and that's the best. We don't like someone to be modest to be weak and helpless and can't do anything.'*

In this sense, the Tongan phrase 'ko e loto'i Tonga', meaning the heart of the Tongan or pride in one's heritage, can be understood as underpinning the Tongan community's involvement. In a similar way, the value of commitment and dedication to a task or mo e loto'aki also underpinned the activities of this project. Whatever role one was assigned, whether one was a kitchen hand, kava mixer or dancer, the balancing of the values of faka'aki'akimui and polepole or laukau was central to contributions to *Siu ki Moana* carried out by the Wellington Tongan community.

These contributions also represent the belief that working collectively, and 'from the heart', for a higher cause brings meaning to life. The Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga's motto, for instance, is ko Tongan mo'unga ki he loto (the mountain of the Tongan is the heart). Tanusia-kihe-lotu identifies that this motto points to the courage to do something worthwhile:

*'Life is worth living when you have a higher purpose, a higher call. If you live just to eat, sleep and have leisure, it's boring ... suffering is part of life, it's reality. If we just go and work and get our pay and enjoy ourselves, just for yourself – what for? It's a very poor kind of life.'*

This was supported by Toa Helu:

*'Every morning [when] I wake up ... to come to work I always pray to give me the wisdom and power so that I can be [a] blessing for other people. Not just to pray to bless myself, but do something that is different. I know that everyone that asks for my help I always try to assist everyone with a warm welcome and just do it from my heart.'*

### **Impacts and Outcomes of Ngāue 'Ofa and Faifatongia**

The impacts and outcomes of the Tongan community contributions to *Siu ki Moana* are captured in the statement made by one of the leaders:

*'It's written in our hearts... when we talk and pass [it] onto our families, our children. And it's an ongoing thing ... It's a platform that we lay down for something else to come out from it.'*

Another leader reflected that:

*'People will carry it in their memories.'*

*Siu ki Moana* imbued a sense of cultural pride and uniqueness amongst the Wellington Tongan community. Tanusia-kihe-lotu adds:

*'I believe that our community had a deeper sense of cultural pride because of the involvement of the Princess as the symbolic representation of the highest level in our hierarchical social system. It was unique, as the exhibition was held at the National Library, a very important institution of national significance which hosted the celebration of Tongan culture, history and local community with our Princess as living members merging together in fulfilling their respective roles in this special occasion.'*

An important outcome was the establishment of relationships between the Tongan community and the National Library:

*'What Tongan culture is all about is ... relationships between people and their monarchy, their royalty, between families, between people and their chiefs and all those relationships are very important ... I can claim that part of Tonga is already ... here forever in the history of the National Library ...'*

*'I think the heart that we all came with made us feel at home, the warmth ... I remember the first time I came here I said, 'It looks like a prison in here'. You know, when you go from door to door. And I think it really touched the heart of the people here in the library. Like close relationships with us and understanding of how we do things in our culture. We broke the ice.'*

The connection and relationship formed between the Wellington Tongan community leaders and Lois Webster, the curator who initiated the exhibition, epitomises the positive impact and meaning of this exhibition for the parties involved. The community leaders remarked:

*'I want to acknowledge Lois Webster because I think when she was in Tonga she really experienced the way we do things and she understood and she was always on our side ... But her attitude and her nature are so unique to me ... dealing with the whole exhibition and ... she's really open to us ... I was really amazed by her feelings while talking ... and excitement. She usually cried while talking in our committee meeting ... She said she can't really hold her tears because ... this is where her heart is.'*

This connection indicates how the *Siu ki Moana* project brought the Tongan community and others together in meaningful relationship. The wider community in Wellington, and indeed in New Zealand, also felt the impact as evidenced, at least anecdotally, by the comments written in the visitors' books.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

The Wellington Tongan community leaders involved in *Siu ki Moana* have explored ways that the exhibition could be experienced by those in other locations and how the exhibition could be added to. Plans are underway to take the exhibition to Tonga. Many of the people in the

exhibition photos are currently unnamed and exhibiting in Tonga may enable relatives or family members to identify them, adding to the recorded history and the exhibition.

The Wellington Tongan community's contributions to the *Siu ki Moana* project portray Tongan values and meaning systems that underpin such activities. While these activities might be construed as volunteering from a Euro-Western point of view, from a Tongan worldview the contributions to *Siu ki Moana* are principally a matter of faifatongia (fulfilling cultural obligations). There are points of connection and similarity between Euro-Western conceptualisations of volunteering and Tongan conceptualisations of faifatongia (such as the activities being unpaid), but there are also some key distinctions. From a Tongan worldview, these activities are connected to a Tongan sense of self defined in one's 'eiki or tu'a status in relation to the other (DIA report, 2002; Robinson and Williams, 2001). Faifatongia in *Siu ki Moana* must be understood in the context of Tongan social systems of ha'a t'ui (royalty), hou'eiki (nobility) and kau tu'a (commoners), and conceptions of tauhi va (nurturing reciprocal relationships) within this system.

There are other key values that underpin the Wellington Tongan community's contributions to *Siu ki Moana*. 'Ofa (love) was a key motivation from a Tongan worldview (Kavaliku, 1961). There was also the desire to langafonua or to uphold and maintain Tongan culture within the diaspora that was evident in the particular use of kava ceremony, the preparation of Tongan cuisine and the performance of faiva.

From a Western capitalist perspective, the impact of the contributions might be seen as causing stress on families and communities who might occupy a position on the economic and social margins of New Zealand society. Such a perspective, however, would rob the Tongan community of the richness and depth it experiences by participation in these events. A key outcome for the Tongan Wellington community was the establishment of relationships and alliances with the National Library. Equally, the impact on Tongan families and communities is expected to be realised not only in the present but also over time. *Siu ki Moana* represented a building block for future generations of Tongans in New Zealand.

*Siu ki Moana* is more than the name of an exhibition. Indeed, the gifts and contributions of the Wellington Tongan community to the exhibition epitomised siu ki moana, reaching across the ocean. When working on such a project, the community and its leaders venture out on ocean swells, out into the unknown, and they experience both challenges and triumphs.

This narrative of ngāue 'ofa and faifatongia contributed by the Wellington Tongan community to *Siu ki Moana* demonstrates Tongan conceptualisations of volunteering and cultural obligations. Faifatongia, the fulfilling of social responsibilities and the nurturing of relationships, is central to a Tongan construction of self. The discipline, exactness, flow and rhythm of the contributions in terms of cuisine, performance, kava ceremony and so on, reflect the depth, dignity and respect that underpin such contributions.

The journey that has taken place leads us into new territories for investigation and understanding. Reflection on the *Siu ki Moana* project to which the Wellington Tongan community made a significant contribution raises new questions for consideration and exploration: What is the role that 'Tongans' in mainstream organisations take on as connection points with Tongan communities? What is the impact on these individuals in terms of their roles and responsibilities in the organisations? With a more public and explicit exploration of Tongan and New Zealand connections, how do we understand the Maori–Tongan connection within a Treaty of Waitangi framework, a neo-colonial analysis and from an indigenous worldview perspective? How do we assess and understand the extent of 'take-up' by the mainstream Papālangi Wellington community when Tongan culture is given such

exposure? How do we understand the role of the church as a social organisation for channelling volunteering and cultural obligations?

It is noted here once again that for the period 1880–1950 the New Zealand and Tongan relationship mostly occurred at the level of the Tongan Royal Family and the New Zealand colonial officials. Since 1950, much water has flowed under the bridge – there have been significant economic, social, political and cultural changes in New Zealand and the Pacific. Effectively, the connection between the nations in the current age is characterised by commoner Tongans forming an integral part of the fabric of New Zealand society. *Siu ki Moana*, as a project in which the Wellington Tongan community contributed their ngāue 'ofa and faifatongia, caused us as Tongan, Pacific, Papāangi and Maori communities in Aotearoa New Zealand to look back in order to look forward for the future and mutual wellbeing and development of our families and communities.

## Summary

This summary sets out a response by this case study and project of pride for Tonga to the research questions.

### **World views, values and meaning systems that underpin the Tongan views of volunteering and associated social practices**

The Tongan sense of self ('eiki or tu'a) defines one's relationships and ways of relating to others, and their wellbeing contributes the Tongan values of ngaue 'ofa and faitongia (voluntary work and cultural obligations). These values underpinned the commitment, participation and contribution of the Wellington Tongan community to the *Siu ki Moana* exhibition.

The strength and warmth of the relationship between Toa Helu and the Wellington Tongan community enabled both the National Library and the Tongan community to come face to face and to form a partnership focused on mutual responsibilities for the exhibition. The Tongan community through their participation humanised and peopled the connection between the history being presented through *Siu ki Moana* and themselves as the descendents of the shared history. The generosity of participation and contributions by the Tongan community as symbolically presented to New Zealand society through the National Library, points to the high hopes they hold for the relationship between the Tongan people and New Zealand.

For the Tongan community, the fulfillment of roles and responsibilities ensured the best of hospitality and cuisine (alitali'ilo mo e Ma'u Metakoni) which in turn was supported by faiva preparations of cultural performances. It is through the values and enactments of hospitality and faiva that kainga as extended family was strengthened and revitalised. The elements of fetakoni'aki or mutual helpfulness were honoured and respected in the desire to celebrate the New Zealand and Tongan connections and relationship over the years.

### **The range and nature of unpaid activities the community engaged in**

In preparation for the exhibition opening, and the demonstrations of tufunga tatongitongi, koka'anga, and lalanga (wood carving, tapa making and weaving of cultural knowledge), a large range of unpaid activities was carried out. These were heightened and added to because of the impact of hosting a member of the Tongan Royal Family.



Community contributions included the giving of time, knowledge, skills, material resources, cultural expertise, community leadership and event management, including cultural performance, service, food preparation and the provision of artifacts for the exhibition.

Weekends were taken up with practices and preparations for three months before the opening; all of the cuisine elements for the occasion had to be grown, found or imported; and preparations for the kava ceremony expressions, Ilokava Fakamuifonua, and for the church service the following week were undertaken to mark the visit of the princess and to arrange the meetings with her. The children also made their own contributions through their 'aonga or tasks.

### **The terms, concepts and associated models that best capture the nature of the contributions made by the Wellington Tongan community**

The elders felt that the most important concept that guided the contributions and fulfillment of cultural obligations was ngaue 'ofa – which motivates and fulfills the spirit of the concept. But more than this, the elders felt that the most important contribution was the spirit of ngaue 'ofa. It is this spirit or nature in which the contributions were made which gives the contributions meaning, depth and richness. The entire event was infused with the spirit and regard of ngaue 'ofa. This benefited not only the community and the National Library staff, but also flowed into the spirit and experience of the exhibition for visitors to the National Library.

The relationship between the Tongan church network, its leaders and communities was able to be called upon to assist because of their respect for their faitongia or cultural obligations. The faka'apa'apa or respect given to elders, kainga and church leadership ensured that cultural obligations were fulfilled out of the sense of tauhi va or reciprocal obligation, and mo e loto'aki, commitment or dedication to each other, kainga, motu and nation.

### **Motivators and cultural drivers to engage in unpaid community activities**

The motivation for the community to engage in this exhibition was a sense of community commitment firstly to the Tongan member of the National Library staff, then to each other once community leaders agreed that there would be mutually beneficial outcomes from supporting such an exhibition because of a positive sense of national pride.

The motivators and drivers were ngaue 'ofa and faitongia; fetakoni'aki, the desire to be mutually helpful; faka'apa'apa, respect for each other and in particular for elders, leaders amongst kainga and church networks, and for the visiting Tongan princess; the spirit of fakatokilalo or humility to be mo e loto'aki, dedicated and committed to the tasks involved; and, of course, the wish to honour the community relationships with Toa Helu and through her the National Library of New Zealand.

Church involvement (Catholic and Methodist) grew from the motivation to honour each other's contributions and participate together in the relationships being forged with the National Library.

### **What are the impacts of voluntary activity on Pacific peoples and/or their families?**

The National Library has been positively affected by the participation and contribution of the Wellington Tongan community. Through their hospitality and participation in this relationship, the staff of the Library gained a greater appreciation of the strength of connection between the Tongan communities that supported and enriched the *Siu ki Moana* exhibition.

For the Tongan community, pride in their achievement increased because they carried out a well-managed and organised project that contributed to the public good. The community celebrated this by writing new songs commemorating the New Zealand/Tonga relationship and the exhibition as an historic moment for Tonga in Wellington. Young people were coached through their faiva or new cultural learning, performances and roles. The elders, kainga and church leaders guided the community through a unique opportunity to honour their relationships with each other and the roles that embody and express these relationships.

# WELLINGTON ATIU COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ATIU-NUI-MARUARUA HOSTEL-BUILDING PROJECTS - A COOK ISLANDS PROJECT OF PRIDE

*Jean Po Mitaera and Kitiona Tauira*

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## **Introduction**

This project of pride centres on the Wellington Atiu community's contribution to the Atiu-nui-maruarua hostel-building projects, and highlights the importance of collective community contributions and how they inspire and motivate people to develop other projects.

The narrative is organised into six parts. They are:

- Atiu Island;
- historical overview of the socio-political relationship between the Cook Islands and Aotearoa New Zealand;
- Wellington Cook Islands community;
- exploring the genealogy of Atiu-nui-maruarua building projects I, II, III, IV;
- cultural values and beliefs underpinning the contributions –
  - kinds of contributions made by the Atiu community
  - impacts and outcomes for the Cook Island communities and others;
- looking to the future.

This description is based on three factors that inform the report and are salient to the place of the Atiu community in Wellington.

Firstly, the historical political relationship between the Cook Islands and Aotearoa New Zealand has influenced the way in which the Atiu and thus the wider Cook Islands community have settled and established themselves in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Secondly, as one of a number of islands that make up the group known as the Cook Islands, Atiu and its people have a distinct culture and way of seeing the world that distinguish it from other Cook Islanders. The term enua is used throughout the narrative. While enua literally means land, it is also an identity accorded to a collective of people who share the cultural heritage of a specific island within the Cook Islands group.

Finally, the future cultural, socio-economic and political development of New Zealand Pacific communities will need to take cognisance of the structural and cultural drivers that shape and motivate Cook Islanders.

### **Atiu (Enuamanu)<sup>17</sup>**



Atiu Coat-of-Arms

Prior to European contact and colonisation, there was no country or entity called the Cook Islands.<sup>18</sup> While there was some contact between the islands to the south and north, there was no united identity. Each of the islands had unique cultures, customs and dialects. Identity was situationally defined and operated from the level of the kopu tangata (family), ngati (tribe) or enua (island/land). Each of these levels is constituted by two factors: one's place of birth and one's genealogy. Outside of one's island of origin, the enua identity is primary.

Atiu tradition places Mariri-tutu-a-manu and his younger brothers Atiu-mua and Atiu-muri as having led the colonisation of Atiu. Their father was Tangaroa-tumu-metua-kore (Source without a father), a name that conveys his divine origins. Mariri named the island Enuamanu, land of animals and insects, to underline the fact that there were no prior inhabitants.

As was the case with other small Pacific islands, the population grew and tensions were vented through a number of battles for land and resources that eventuated in the partitioning of land. Tribal strongholds and the eventual development of traditional governance were established which continue to this day.

According to Atiu elders, the island was in traditional times led by seven mataiapo.<sup>19</sup> From this seven, three were elevated to the status of ariki (paramount chiefs) and the other four continued in their roles. The three ariki are: Rongomatane Ariki, Ngamaru Ariki and

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<sup>17</sup> Atiu and Enuamanu are used inter-changeably throughout the text as they are used in actual practice. The island is formally known as Atiu.

<sup>18</sup> At one time, the islands in the southern group were known as the Hervey Islands. The Russian cartographer is accredited with the last iteration of islands that belong to the group and the name Cook Islands in honour of Captain Cook who is accredited with discovering the islands.

<sup>19</sup> Mataiapo are senior chiefs second only to the ariki – paramount chief.

Parua Ariki.<sup>20</sup> The tribal titles of Atiu extend to the islands of Mitiaro and Mauke and these together form the overall Nga-pu-toru administrative system.<sup>21</sup>

## **The Cook Islands and Aotearoa New Zealand: Historical Overview**

### **The First Missionaries**

Captain Cook made two voyages to the Cooks in the 1700s. Almost 30 years later in 1821, the London Missionary Society (LMS) commenced its work on Aitutaki moving on to Rarotonga and the other islands of the southern group before heading to the northern group. The LMS missionaries first converted the chiefly ranks on each island as a way to secure safe passage and support. On Atiu, Rongomatane Ariki was one of the first converts and escorted John Williams to Mitiaro and Mauke. John Williams' arrival, 19 July (1823), is celebrated as Gospel Day on Atiu. The first Roman Catholic Church was dedicated in 1896.

### **Protectorate and Annexation**

One of Atiu's paramount chiefs of the time, Ngamaru Ariki,<sup>22</sup> was Prince Consort to Takau Makea Nui Ariki of Rarotonga. It was Takau Makea Nui Ariki who, fearing a take-over by the French from neighbouring Tahiti, petitioned Britain for protection in 1888. A British Protectorate was declared in 1888, initially pertaining only to the islands in the southern group and, with the formation of a consulate on Rarotonga in 1898, was extended to the northern group.

In September 1900, the Pacific Islands Annexation Bill was introduced to the New Zealand parliament. Though hotly debated, the Bill was passed and the Cook Islands were formally annexed to New Zealand in 1901.<sup>23</sup>

The islands named on the schedule for annexation constituting the Cook Islands were: Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Mangaia, Atiu, Mitiaro, Mauke, Manuae, Manihiki, Rakahanga, Palmerston, Niue, Penrhyn, Takutea and Pukapuka.

### **The Establishment of the Cook Islands Progressive Association (CIPA)**

During the 1940s, New Zealand and Australia established phosphate mines in French Polynesia. Cook Islanders were recruited on a contract basis to work as labourers in the mines on Makatea. Albert Henry, in response to complaints regarding the appalling working conditions on Makatea (later dubbed the Makatea Affair), established an Auckland branch of the CIPA (Hancock, 1979; Krishnan, Schoeffel & Warren 1994).

Many earned the fare to travel to New Zealand, which helped encourage permanent Cook Island migration to New Zealand (Krishnan, Schoeffel & Warren, 1994).

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<sup>20</sup> This is not a conclusive list and, depending on who you talk to, the specific number and names of titles may vary. This is due to the fact that some titles are still being contested. See Mokoroa, 1984.

<sup>21</sup> Historical warfare and conquests have resulted in Atiu's ariki reigning over the other two islands. Another version refers to the division of an eel, with Atiu being the head, Mitiaro the stomach and Mauke the tail. As a consequence, Mitiaro has a key role as peace maker/keeper and Atiu of leadership.

<sup>22</sup> Ngamaru Ariki gave consent for Nga-pu-toru (Atiu, Mauke and Mitiaro) to join the British Protectorate as well as be annexed. He was instrumental in developing Atiu's economic production. For example, he owned the ship *Ngamaru Ariki* which traded around the southern Cooks and Tahiti during that time. A small community of Atiuans was at the same time establishing itself in Tahiti.

<sup>23</sup> While on the one hand annexation was petitioned from Rarotonga, it was an active demonstration by New Zealand of its expanding colonial power.

### **Eventual Self-government**

During the mid-1950s, despite New Zealand's efforts to boost the Cook Islands economy, emigration increased. By 1957, the Cook Islands had entered another political phase, with the Cook Islands Legislative Assembly undertaking administration for full internal self-government which was followed by the Cook Islands Amendment Act of 1962. The Assembly was presented with four options for the future development and political identity of the islands: federation with other Pacific islands, complete independence, integration with New Zealand or self-government (Mitaera, 1991). General elections were held on 20 April 1965. There was overwhelming support for the proposed Constitution and self-government, and the first government of the Cook Islands Party headed by Albert Henry came to power.

On 26 July 1965, the Cook Islands became a state in free association<sup>24</sup> with New Zealand. Cook Islanders hold dual Cook Islands and New Zealand citizenship.

### **Cook Island Migration to Aotearoa New Zealand**

The post-war period found New Zealand short of labour and Cook Islanders were keen to meet that demand. Two key factors contributed to Cook Islanders' ability to migrate to Aotearoa New Zealand. Firstly, those who had worked in the phosphate mines of Makatea had the money to pay their fares and, secondly, they held dual citizenship which created a legitimate pathway for them to enter New Zealand (Krishnan, Schoeffel & Warren, 1994).

The first significant migration of Cook Islanders to New Zealand occurred in the late 1940s, when they (mostly women) were recruited as domestic staff for wealthy European New Zealand professionals. Chain migration quickly established further community networks which led to the beginnings of Cook Islands communities in Auckland, Hawkes Bay, South Waikato, Wairarapa and Wellington.<sup>25</sup> By 1965, most migrants were coming from the southern islands of the Cooks. Aitutakians and Mangaian dispersed further through the North Island than Rarotongans, who tended to settle in Auckland. Mangaian ventured as far south as Bluff, where they laboured in freezing works and at the Tīwai Point aluminium smelter. Aituan, in the main, were concentrated in Auckland and Wellington.

Between 1976 and 1981, the number of Cook Islanders born in New Zealand grew by almost 14%. By 2001, there were 52,600 Cook Islanders living in New Zealand, making them the second-largest migrant Pacific population in the country and three times the size of the Cook Islands-based population (NZ Census, 2001). By comparison, Australia's relationship with the Cook Islands is based mainly on shared membership of regional organisations, and a small aid programme. There are roughly 15,000 Cook Islanders living in Australia.

### **The Wellington Cook Islands Community**

The Wellington Cook Islands community was initially centred on the Pacific Islands Congregational Church in Newtown, supporting each other and setting aside denominational differences during those early years. Encouraged by Albert Henry's visit to Wellington and

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<sup>24</sup> Free association is probably best described as one step short of full independence. New Zealand continued to have defence and wider international responsibilities, while the Cook Islands are responsible for their day-to-day administration. Today, the Cooks legislate and conduct international negotiations in their own right.

<sup>25</sup> In 1963, New Zealand's Cook Islands population was approximately 6,000.

his promotion of the idea of a Cook Islands Progressive Association,<sup>26</sup> a small group of community members established the Cook Islands Society Inc. New Zealand (Wellington).<sup>27</sup>

The numbers in Wellington continued to grow throughout the 1960s and 1970s and movement out of Newtown to Porirua and the Hutt Valley reflected the need for affordable housing and employment. Cook Islanders were also choosing to return to the traditional churches of the Cook Islands now that numbers were sufficient to form independent Cook Islands congregations.

This growth also saw the development of enua associations. Collectives of people who share the cultural heritage of a specific island within the Cook Islands group were forming into cultural and social groups. While the Cook Islands identity was useful in New Zealand political environments, Cook Islanders themselves have preferred to self-identify by their island of origin through which village, district and tribal connections are practised.

The Atiu Island Trust was the first enua group to be established in Wellington. More than 30 years later, all inhabited enua of the Cook Islands have an enua group. This is most evident in the annual Cook Islands Day hosted by the Porirua Cook Islands Association as well as in the hosting of enua groups from the islands, Australia or other parts of Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **Exploring the Genealogy of Atiu-Nui-Maruarua<sup>28</sup>**

Tribal and community efforts to construct specific buildings are a usual practice in Atiu and the wider Cook Islands. Meeting houses, churches, pastors' manses, Sunday school houses and are ariki (paramount chiefs' residences), irrespective of denomination or village, have all required community effort in order that they be successfully completed.

One of the unique features of the Atiu narrative is that it does not centre on an individual project nor does it have a distinct beginning and end. This narrative focuses on the Wellington Atiu Island Trust and its contribution to a small number of building projects that have been constructed over more than 100 years to meet the needs of the Atiu people. Atiu-nui-maruarua have been built in the communities and spaces where Atiu people live and gather. It seems apparent now that when the first hall was constructed in Atiu, there was no plan for any other such buildings elsewhere in the Pacific. In the late 1800s, no one could have known that migration would have such a huge effect. What is clear is that wherever Atiuans have migrated, they have continued to work and organise themselves in familial and enua structures.

There are currently four Atiu-nui-maruarua buildings, in Atiu, in Patutoa Tahiti, on Rarotonga and in Auckland. The following sections discuss each building and identify some of the factors that contributed to their construction. The beginnings of these building projects also paralleled the beginnings of the Atiu Island Trust. While the Trust's primary focus is not the construction of these hostels, it has become a significant leadership and monitoring body over important Atiu projects across the Cook Islands, Tahiti, New Zealand and Australia.

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<sup>26</sup> Which he had already established in Auckland. Henry was also looking for political support for his eventual entry into Cook Islands politics.

<sup>27</sup> The society was gifted land by the Wellington City Council upon which members built themselves a community hall which continues to be used today.

<sup>28</sup> Atiu-nui-maruarua is the name given to a collection of Atiu hostels built by Atiuans in locations where they have formed Atiuan communities. The hostels are differentiated by the sequential order in which they were built. The name itself affirms the island of Atiu as being nui (great) and maruarua (strong and plentiful).

### **Atiu-nui-maruarua I**

The first of the Atiu buildings is on Atiu, built originally as a dance hall and a place where visitors could be received and hosted. The full name of the building is Atiu-nui-maruarua-i-te-tangi'anga-o-Teipo. Teipo was a chief of the village of Te'enui<sup>29</sup> renowned for his compassion and hospitality. Regardless of who the visitor was, Teipo would always offer hospitality to them.

Today the village continues with the practice established by Teipo, and Atiu-nui-maruarua I is acknowledged by Atiuans as the first building dedicated to meet the needs and services of all Atiuans. It has become a home to returning Atiuans, and is still the first venue to receive and host visitors whether they arrive by sea, land or air.

### **Atiu-nui-maruarua II**

During the early 1900s, Atiuan labourers were taken to Tahiti to work in the sugarcane fields and whilst there combined efforts to purchase a large plot of land in order to establish a settlement in which they would build homes for their families. A second wave of Cook Islands migrants arrived in the 1940s, brought over as labourers to mine phosphate on Makatea. As the numbers grew in Tahiti, it became evident that a community house would be needed to accommodate community and social events. By the late 1960s, the combined effort of Cook Islands, New Zealand and Tahiti-based Atiuans saw the construction of Atiu-nui-maruarua II.

Over the years, Patutoa has hosted numerous groups – both Cook Islands and non-Cook Islands – visiting Tahiti. The fact that the hostel is part of the Atiu community of Patutoa ensures that there is always a host and continuity in the receiving and hosting of visitors.

### **Atiu-nui-maruarua III**

The Cook Islands celebrated self-governance in 1965 with its first constitution celebration which is today called Te Maeva Nui. A large contingent of officials and performers arrived on Rarotonga from the outer islands. The young group of performers from Atiu stayed at the Tupapa<sup>30</sup> meeting house, which could not accommodate all of them. A tent was constructed on one side of the building where some of them slept. One evening, strong winds and heavy rain hit the southern side of the island and the Atiu performers were soaked. That incident served as an impetus for them to put to their elders, who included the late Papa Vainerere Tangatapoto, Papa Paiere Mokoroa and Papa Mata Arai, the proposition that a piece of land be bought on Rarotonga on which to build a house. While they were hopeful, they were not confident their request would be taken up. However, it was, and in due course, the Atiuan leaders petitioned different chiefly landowners within Avarua for land. One of those was successful and the Atiuan people rallied and organised themselves to begin construction.

During that time, there were few local qualified tradespeople and construction work was undertaken by the government. Not wishing to be delayed, a request was put to a European carpenter living on the island to lead the construction work. Atiuan plumbers, electricians, concrete cutters and others formed the construction team. All of them, including the European builder, gave their labour voluntarily which kept costs to a minimum and ensured faster completion.

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<sup>29</sup> Because of the terrain of the island, all visitors to Atiu must first go past Te'enui to reach their final destination.

<sup>30</sup> Tupapa is a village in the district of Avarua, on the island Rarotonga.



From the negotiations for land and meeting different building and environmental compliance issues, to fundraising and actual building and furnishing, the hostel was completed by 1980.

Atiu-nui-maruarua III was the first enua hostel built on Rarotonga. Today, all of the outer islands of the Cook Islands have their own hostel on Rarotonga to which their people can come on their way out of the Cook Islands or when they come to visit from New Zealand and Australia. In 2005, a major renovation project was instigated to upgrade the Atiu hostel on Rarotonga.

#### **Atiu-nui-maruarua IV**

With the steady increase of Atiuans migrating to and settling in Auckland and Wellington, the need for a place to meet and conduct community affairs eventually came to the fore. In Wellington, there were already two Cook Islands community-owned buildings, the Cook Islands Society Hall in Newtown and Te Akapuanga in Porirua.

This was not the case in Auckland where enua groups were growing strong in both number and capacity, and thus developing independently of other enua groups, none more so than Atiu enua. The Auckland Atiu community therefore gave notice of their intentions to build, for which an Atiu-wide effort got underway. This facility was opened in 1995. This hostel, like those in Atiu, Tahiti and Rarotonga, has become a focal point for Atiuans across the three countries. The Atiu people have sought community funding for enua-focused development, skills and employment initiatives as well as partnering tertiary institutions to deliver courses to the Cook Islands community. While there have been some leadership challenges, these have not deterred efforts to make it a place for Atiuans and other Cook Islanders to hold their events.

#### **Atiu-nui-maruarua V**

In the late 1970s, there was a possibility that a group of young Atiuans might build in Wellington. This did not eventuate. Atiu leaders have said that the community in Sydney is preparing to build a home for Atiuans there, with a target of \$1m for fundraising.

### **Cultural Values and Beliefs Underpinning the Contributions**

Atiuans continually affirm their faith in God as being a primary factor in their capacity to achieve their most earnest goals. Whilst they have had to make physical and financial contributions, they are very clear in stating that their continued faith has made their journey easier and relatively problem free, and that each level has been completed without undue upheaval.

For instance, the trustees of the Atiu Island Trust are the seven kopu ariki (chiefly families) of Atiu, the President being Ada Tetupu Rongomatane Ariki. Adopting this organisational structure ensures that every Atiuan, irrespective of where they reside or their age, has a direct relationship with the issues and projects of the Trust. Thus this is a people who continue to be gathered and mobilised under chiefly leadership.

Although all Atiuans self-identify under different chiefly and tribal mantles, they can and do make genealogical connections to each other. Social, cultural and political structures that define Atiu island and its people have been adopted by the Wellington Atiu community so that they regroup in mind and spirit depending on the issue at hand. This then activates a known norm for each person's role, way of contributing and relationship to others.

In Wellington, the leaders of the Atiu community consider the people, timing, family numbers and tribal affiliations to determine how they might call for contributions, whether they be in labour, food, money or in kind. Avatea Raka makes note of the Atiuan saying, ‘...kake kake i tona puku, kake kake i tona puku’, which essentially translates to, ‘...each person must climb his own mountain’. The mountain might be climbed by a family, a village or a tribe or it might need an entire enua effort.

Regular visits to and from Wellington by the ariki of Atiu keep notions of tribal affiliations and loyalty fresh. This community, because of its perceived strength, is regularly consulted by all forms of Atiu leadership in Atiu, the wider Cook Islands, Australia and New Zealand. The level of interaction by leaders ensures continuity of the Atiu narrative, transference of information from one community to another, and shared ownership of events and projects.

So while Atiuans see themselves as active members of the wider Cook Islands community, they will seize every opportunity to demonstrate that they can climb their own mountain and possibly climb it better than others. This attitude is not seen as arrogant but as a key motivator that encourages and strengthens the resolve of Atiuans to serve each other, to be loyal to their leaders and to uphold the honour of their enua.

The concept of apaipai enua (lifting your land), which is similar to that expressed by Avatea Raka, provides one basis from which Atiuans understand their responsibility to their enua in the presence of Cook Islanders from other enua. The Cook Islands Day celebration held in September each year in Porirua is a poignant example of this concept. Each island’s mana is hoisted high and is visible to other Cook Islanders present. It is this concept that other Cook Islanders have in common with Atiuans.

### **Kinds of Contributions Made by the Atiu Community**

The Atiu Island Trust (Wellington) is made up of Atiuans, most of whom were born in Atiu. The existence of the Trust reflects their length of time in New Zealand as well as their desire to practise those values that identify them as Atiuans. Thus their contribution to any Atiu event, including the Atiu-nui-maruarua building projects, is primarily kin-based.

The contributions may be different and reflect the capacity of the Wellington community at any time in history. For instance, in the case of Atiu-nui-maruarua I, there was no significant Cook Islands community in New Zealand at the time it was constructed and the contributions made were allocated to villages in Atiu according to their skills and resources. Papa Mata Arai and Teau Payne talk of one village providing the roof, another providing labourers to make the bricks, while some men went fishing and another group harvested taro. Women and men cooked. Everything was done according to the capability of different people. Money contributions were not a factor in the construction of this first building.

There is insufficient information to quantify time in terms of planning and organising or even the actual construction itself. The cash value of food produce is impossible to estimate in today’s currency. What we do know is that time and knowledge – both traditional and contemporary – were called on to effect the project. Being based in Atiu itself, all ranks and ages of people, from every tribe and village, contributed according to their defined roles.

In Tahiti, the first contribution was made by those early migrants who purchased the initial land base. The Wellington Atiu community’s contribution to that hostel occurred at different levels. Fundraising in Wellington was organised within the various family, tribal and village groups. A popular fundraising tool of Cook Islands communities, dance socials, was used.

Atiuans in Wellington contributed to their own relatives' efforts in Tahiti by sending particular food-stuffs, money and furnishings. They also supported their relatives in Atiu who themselves were contributing to the hostel. Finally, the Wellington Atiu community went to the opening in their own right accompanied by a large financial contribution as well as supplementary furnishings to outfit the hostel.

The Rarotonga-based hostel seems to have required the same kind of support from the Wellington community to that of Tahiti. The Atiu people of Wellington held several fundraising events that required labour contributions, numerous hours of dance rehearsals by young and old alike for social events, almost weekly food contributions as well as financial contributions. Again, a large group travelled from Wellington to Rarotonga for the opening and took, as before, a large financial contribution (which was the combined effort of the fundraising), food and supplementary furnishings to outfit the hostel. In fact, the Wellington Atiu community has continued to support the ongoing maintenance of this hostel and in 2004 contributed \$20,000 to the hostel's renovations. Nandie Glassie, President of the Atiu community in Rarotonga, saw the Wellington contribution as encouraging and it was used to spearhead the fundraising efforts.

Atiu-nui-maruarua IV saw Wellington strategise itself as if it were a village. It took on a competitive spirit with other regions in New Zealand both in its fundraising and in its participation at the opening. The community fundraised for over a year in preparation for the opening and attempted a wider range of fundraising initiatives to draw in more non-Atiuans. Food raffles and battons-up were popular additions to the fundraising efforts, although these again called on labour, food and money contributions from within their own community.

### **Impacts and Outcomes for the Cook Islands Communities and Others**

The impacts and outcomes for the Atiuan Cook Islanders and other communities are huge. The Atiu-nui-maruarua building projects have provided one avenue through which Atiuans and Nga-pu-toru<sup>31</sup> have consolidated a platform from which their community can develop.

The Auckland hostel is an example of community development that is likely to highlight and influence the way in which these hostels might continue to evolve.

The Atiu-nui-maruarua hostels provide a home base that Atiuans and Cook Islanders can go to and leave from anywhere in the world and, as such, the model brings to the fore for wider debate notions of 'identity' and 'rights of ownership'.

Cook Islanders do not build churches. They create communities and build homes in the places where they choose to live.

Atiuans have taken Atiu to where their people are. This will in time impact on other Pacific communities who continue to forge ahead and cross international boundaries.

### **Looking to the Future**

While the Wellington Atiu community is for the most part devoted to Atiu-focused issues, it has provided other enua with a model of how to be Atiuans in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As Teau Payne and Avatea Raka note, future leadership will be a major issue for consideration. The ability of existing leaders to call on the loyalty of their enua kinsmen is possible because there is still an Atiu-born base but that is changing quickly. Over 50% of Cook Islanders in New Zealand are born here. Thus the challenge of 'ownership' of the enua identity will be real for new and upcoming leaders.

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<sup>31</sup> Kin-related islands of Atiu, Mauke and Mitiaro.

Already enua groups are being challenged by their youth about the financial contributions being asked of them and their parents, which they tend to see as incongruent with their own wellbeing.

## **Summary**

This summary sets out a response by the Wellington Atiu Island Trust (Wellington Atiu community) to the project of pride and the research questions.

### **Atiu enua people's world views of volunteering, values and meaning systems which underpin such views and associated social practices**

Prior to contact with the European or papaa, there was no collective 'Cook Islands' identity. Each of the islands has unique cultures, customs and dialects with identity situationally defined and enacted through the kopu tangata, ngati, enua or family, tribe or island. Each of these levels is constituted by one's place of birth and one's genealogy, and outside one's island of origin the enua identity is primary. The Atiu value of Apaipai enua<sup>32</sup> or the shared genealogical and enua identity defines relationships, contributions and responsibility lines.

### **The relationships and connections between Atiu peoples have continued into current-day values and practices despite the influence of Christianity and colonial administration.**

For Atiu peoples, the leadership arrangements are not usually transferable to other locations outside of Atiu. However, uniquely the leadership of the Wellington Atiu community has exercised its cultural leadership to gather and organise itself – within the Wellington community. The Wellington Atiu community has chosen not to build its own Atiu hostel. As an alternative it has concentrated its significant communal resources and contributions into supporting other Atiu hostel-building and maintenance projects across the Pacific region.

### **What is the range and nature of unpaid activities in which participants engage?**

For the Wellington Atiu community, the contributions they have made over the years include: leadership and eldership responsibilities across the nations where Atiuans are located, for example, between Atiu, Tahiti, Australia and New Zealand. In preparation for construction, Atiu people have learned to be skilled negotiators and managers of contractors, provided labour during building, contributed skilled construction workers and carried out many fundraising drives.

During the construction phases, people have catered for many visitors, provided generous hospitality for the building teams, provided furnishings for hostels, and travelled to each other's openings and events to support each other's fundraising efforts. While this is happening, they will simultaneously organise and communicate with other Atiuan and wider Cook Island networks to make transparent their community events and contributions.

Family and community will also attend and contribute to funerals within their connected kin and enua groups; host visiting ariki; organise, attend and contribute to each other's haircutting ceremonies; and attend educational and government workshops; all the while making significant monetary contributions from one Atiu enua community to another.

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<sup>32</sup> On this occasion, Apaipai enua is contextualised to an Atiuan narrative. It is a value shared by all enua of the Cook Islands.

### **Terms, concepts and associated models that best capture the nature of unpaid volunteering, and the fulfillment of cultural obligations activities for Atiu enua peoples**

The Atiu enua elders described their aroa or love for their kopu tangata or families, matakeinanga or peoples of shared ancestry, and for their lands and surrounding environment as the main concept that captures the wish to fulfill their cultural obligations to one another. Giving and making contributions were part of the culture and from this they too found wellbeing and a sense of aroa.

To practise aroa is seen as fulfilling cultural obligations through service and this is passed down from one generation to another. Turuturu is to offer support upon which people can depend during a time of vulnerability. Turuturu or honourable service is described as internalised or 'in the blood'. The elders acknowledged that their younger people have begun to change their views on contributions because of the influences of growing up in New Zealand. However, even the young people agreed that giving support or tauturu (carrying out assistance by volunteering) was done out of a sense of care or love, without expectations of returns. Tauturu is to help. It is essentially different to the elders' meaning above; for example, it is helping a neighbour by carrying her shopping inside.

Both generations were concerned to uphold the honour of their enua amongst Cook Islands people and internationally, although the elders were driven primarily by the observance of kin-based relationships to fulfill cultural obligations.

### **Some motivations for Atiu enua to engage in unpaid community activities**

Kake kake i tona puku, meaning each person must climb their own mountain, is a key driver for the Atiu enua community. This may be understood as the responsibility to rise to the challenge to achieve as a community together and the responsibility to excel and succeed as a family, as a village or as an entire enua grouping.

The Atiu enua community as described by the elders sees itself as an active member of the wider Cook Island community, committed to seizing the opportunity to demonstrate to other enua groupings that Atiu enua can fulfill, achieve and succeed in climbing their own mountain, sometimes even better than others can. The support and motivation for this is the belief that Atiu enua people will help each other achieve shared goals, and thereby honour and affirm mutually held interests, benefits and genealogy that transcend oceans and time.

The Wellington Atiu enua and the way in which they organise themselves according to their cultural norms also act as a catalyst for other enua groups, thereby performing the role of being motivators of other enua just by their presence and participation.

### **What are the impacts of voluntary activity on Atiu enua communities and/or their families?**

It is noted that while the Wellington Atiu enua has chosen not to build an enua hostel, it continues to honour its relationship by being a well-organised collective contributor.

Atiu enua elders and leaders in the Wellington community maintain their connections and aroa for their home lands and matakeinanga kin through enacting these responsibilities. They are devoted to Atiu, and their practices enable them to feel a sense of direct connection with the future of their Atiu enua and as contributors who may maintain a voice in Atiu affairs and issues. The elders' commitment to make regular visits to the Cook Islands and Atiu sustains their face-to-face participation. Conversely, the Cook Island young people's Faafaletui focus group expressed concern at the levels of contributions being made by their community and that these contributions were not congruent with achieving wellbeing as a community.

While taking this into account, it must be acknowledged that Atiu enua people's worldview is centred upon their identity that is connected to their ancestral lands. The young people's suggestion that the achievement of wellbeing in New Zealand must be done at the cost of participation in cultural contributions is contradictory. If connection to land is the central element of identity for enua groups, then reducing connections through non-participation will weaken the access young people have to wellbeing as descendants of Atiu genealogies. What also needs to be acknowledged is that there are enlivening and beneficial impacts of staying closely connected to Atiu enua because, as the Wellington elders confirmed, it is these connections that generate wellbeing physically, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually and culturally where Atiu people are situated.

# **O LE SAO A LE AFEAFE O VAETOEFAGA I LANA SO'O MA LE HOANI WAITITI MARAE -A SAMOAN PROJECT OF PRIDE**

*Taimalieutu Kiwi Tamasese, Tafaoimalo Loudeen Parsons  
and Luisa Tanuvasa*

## **Acknowledgements**

Our acknowledgements and thanks go to those who inspired this So'o project. Sometimes a death in the family is a catalyst for reconnections and the restoration of relationships. This was the case with this project of pride.

The funeral of Fineaso Taimalieutu Pulotu brought the Samoan and Maori communities face to face through the leadership of Afioiga Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese and Dr Pita Sharples. These two elders and their regard for one another, and the historical connections between Samoan and Maori, underpin this project.

Generous contributions were made by many people on both sides of the relationship. The people of Hoani Waititi Marae were gracious hosts who honoured the historical relationship with Samoans. Reciprocal contributions were made by Samoans resident in New Zealand. A special contribution was prepared by the cultural panel that travelled from Samoa, many from Asau, in Savaii. They made abundant cultural presentations, mats, Siapo, carved umeke and pate that were presented to Hoani Waititi Mare at the poroporoaki.

Acknowledgement and gratitude must also go to those who had the courage and generosity to support this unique project directly by funding, facilitating travel, providing accommodation and contributing necessary resources.

The Maori and Samoan children's contributions were plentiful and they each demonstrated by their joyful preparations and the presentation of their cultural contributions the benefits of bringing Maori and Samoan children together and the value of celebrating children's cultures.

## **Introduction**

The So'o ma le Hoani Waititi Marae is the Samoan project of pride case study. This project was chosen because it expresses the world views and values of Samoan communities in their home country and in the countries they have adopted through migration and settlement. At the So'o, Samoans resident in Samoa made contributions that were added to the contributions made by Samoans resident in New Zealand. This social practice operates reciprocally when New Zealand resident Samoans contribute to projects in Samoa. Both of these realities, of dual site contributions and reciprocity, are lived out by Samoans and Pacific peoples all over the world.

As well as providing a means by which connections between two peoples, Maori and Samoan, were strengthened, the three-day so'o also serves as an illustration of the wide range of unpaid activities that Samoan communities and families carry out when their leaders call

on them to join together. Participation is multi-layered and multi-dimensional. It demonstrates the sense of belonging and commitment felt by families and communities, and is also inclusive of those who have died.

After the funeral of Fineaso Taimalieutu Pulotu in January 2003, Dr Pita Sharples and the people of Hoani Waititi Marae invited the extended family of Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese and the wider Samoan community to return one year later for a so'otaga between the two cultures. The So'o Project developed in response to this invitation and took shape over the year to February 2004.

The So'o was opened by Dr Pita Sharples and elders of Hoani Waititi Marae. His Worship the Mayor of Waitakere City, Bob Harvey, made a speech of welcome to the Samoans that was replied to by Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi. In his welcoming speech, Bob Harvey apologised on behalf of Waitakere City for its part in the suppression of the Mau movement in Samoa, and underlined the bonds of connection between all New Zealanders and the Pacific, and between the past, present and future. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi spoke of the connections symbolised and expressed in the So'o:

We have come here this year to do a So'o. So'o means connection. We are celebrating connection, our connection with our ancestors, our mythology and our connection with our history. Why do we celebrate these things? Because they speak to us in a unique way and bring out the best in us. The test of our connectedness or our kinship is whether we stand by each other in adverse times.

Our redemption is to restore the message of these connections and relationships. These relationships between us and our God/s, us and the ancestors, us and each other as well as us and the environment are tapu relationships and must be restored and lived out again. Let us not turn our backs on the wisdom of our ancestors. The message is still as relevant and applicable to us now as Maori, as Samoan and as Pakeha as it was then.

This account sets out the reasons for the So'o strategy, the vision that guided it, the contributions made to the So'o project and its impacts on the participants. It places the So'o in the context of New Zealand economic and social statistics for Samoan people resident in New Zealand, and analyses the contributing strands of the So'o, that include preparations, contributions, the meeting and connectedness between the participants, and the cultural significance of the So'o.

This Samoan So'o project of pride was chosen as a specific case study to show how Samoan conceptions and perspectives of cultural obligations and volunteering are demonstrated, the motivations for them, and how they contribute to well-being by increasing and restoring cultural and social capacity. One of the aims of the project was to create, support and monitor a culturally-driven strategy to address the social and economic developmental lag within Pacific communities in Aotearoa by giving expression to values and a way of life that are seldom understood or appreciated, and whose presence is not reflected in New Zealand census records of social and cultural behaviour.



## Exploring the Genealogy of the So'o 2004

### Understanding So'o as a Cultural Concept

So'o literally means connection. It refers to the link between humans and Atua/God and between humans and the environment. According to Samoan mythology, the earth, the stars, the sun, the moon and humans are connected by genealogy. Atua/God is an ancestor (progenitor), not the creative instigator. In the genealogy of the Samoan cultural worldview, Atua/God, the environment and human beings all share divinity. Connection is established through common origin and ancestry.<sup>33</sup>

In late January 2003, Pulotu Fineaso Taimalieutu Tamasese died. Most of his children live in Henderson and because of the size of the family and their close proximity to Hoani Waititi Marae, Pulotu's children approached the marae, asking if they could take their father there.

When Pita Sharples of Hoani Waititi learnt that Pulotu was a cousin of Tupua Tamasese, he said that because of the special links between Hoani Waititi Marae and the Tamasese family, Pulotu's funeral would be treated as 'family' or 'whanaunga' of the marae. After the funeral, the Tamasese family gave tapa and fine mats to the marae. Following the cultural presentations, Hoani Waititi Marae invited the Tamasese family to return a year later to continue and to solidify the connections between them.

Pulotu's death caused the extended community and family network to come face to face with Maori after a gap of nearly two and a half decades. The meeting between them was defined as a So'o by Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi. A partnership was then struck between the Hoani Waititi Marae whanau and Afeafe o Vaetoeafaga of Samoa to plan for the So'o so that it would be an event of celebration and connection, and also a pilot for future initiatives of this kind between the two communities.

The two partners planned the three days according to their own values, ethics, rituals and symbols, with an awareness of and respect for the activities of the other. The So'o between Afeafe o Vaetoeafaga and Hoani Waititi Marae was the result of an honourable exchange of 'daily kindnesses' between two groups of human beings.

This exchange in 'human kindnesses' is not a normative practice between unique cultural groupings within Aotearoa New Zealand; and until now it had not been a normative experience between Pacific communities and Maori communities. However, the So'o between Afeafe o Vaetoeafaga and Hoani Waititi Marae proves that there can be connections restored, exchanges of kindnesses made, and partnerships built and strengthened between relational communities without causing cultural dilution or compromise and loss.

The recognition of shared values contributed to the success of the So'o. The project of pride poses then the question of how we translate the concepts and practices of So'o into the wider Samoan and Maori societies. The So'o project of pride aimed to create a pilot model for how these exchanges can be explored, organised and repeated between Pacific and Maori communities.

The contributions of the dead, and the historical relationships with the people at Hoani Waititi Marae provided the foundation from which the So'o project grew. It emerged out of acts of *hospitality and reciprocity* by both the Samoan and Maori partners to each other. Acts of kindness by Hoani Waititi Marae were *reciprocated* by Pulotu's family. The invitation to

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<sup>33</sup> This definition was provided by Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, March 2004.

return was accepted and responded to by Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese as the leader of the Samoan partners. The preparations were carried out as *voluntary contributions* and in response to *cultural obligations* as aiga, as matai, as untitled men and women, and as children and young people.



Photo: Loudeen Parsons

*Josiah Faleolo (aged 7) and his Afeafe o Vaetoefaga partners: an act of cultural restoration*

#### **Evidence of the Need for the So’o 2004**

There is a large Samoan population in New Zealand, and statistical analysis clearly shows that there are disparities between this population and other New Zealanders. The following table shows the composition of Pacific populations both in the Pacific Islands and in New Zealand.

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Island Population Estimate</b>	<b>New Zealand Population Census 2001</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>% in New Zealand</b>
<b>Samoa</b>	<b>170,900</b>	<b>115,017</b>	<b>285,917</b>	<b>40.2%</b>
<b>Cook Island</b>	<b>19,300</b>	<b>52,569</b>	<b>71,869</b>	<b>73.1%</b>
<b>Tongan</b>	<b>99,400</b>	<b>40,716</b>	<b>140,116</b>	<b>29.1%</b>
<b>Niuean</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>20,148</b>	<b>22,048</b>	<b>91.4%</b>
<b>Tokelau</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>6,204</b>	<b>7,704</b>	<b>80.5%</b>
<b>Fiji</b>	<b>463,432</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>470,432</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>756,432</b>	<b>234,654</b>	<b>998,086</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

*SSoSource:* Ministry of Education, *Pasifika Peoples in New Zealand Education: A Statistical Snapshot 2004*, p. 4. This report did not include a figure for Fiji. These figures were sourced from the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics and include only the figures for Fijians ([www.statsfiji.gov.fj](http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj)).

The Ministry of Pacific Affairs in its 'Pacific progress report on the economic status of Pacific people in New Zealand' (2002) highlights that while significant progress has been made by Pacific peoples in New Zealand, there still remains a disparity gap between the dominant New Zealand population and Pacific peoples in the following areas:

- criminal justice;
- education;
- employment;
- labour force participation;
- income and salary levels;
- housing.

Pacific people's population figures are as follows:<sup>34</sup>

- In 2001, Pacific peoples made up 6.5% of the total population. One in 16 or 248,954 people in New Zealand are of Pacific ethnicity.
- One in every two Pacific people is Samoan.
- Pacific peoples have a much younger age structure than the total population, with a median age of just 21 years in 2001 compared with 35 years for the total population.

#### *Criminal justice*

- Pacific people experience higher rates of conviction and prosecution than the total population, particularly in the younger age groups.
- Rates of conviction are higher among the Pacific population than among the total population regardless of age. Those with highest rates are 17–19 year olds, with 843 convictions per 10,000 Pacific people, compared with 698 per 10,000 in the total population.

#### *Education*

- Pacific children tend to stay at school longer than others, with 64% of Pacific 14-year olds staying at school until age 17 in 2001. However, they tend to leave school with lower qualifications than others, with 26% leaving school with no qualifications in 2001.

#### *Employment*

- The proportion of Pacific adults who were gainfully employed fell from 62% to 43% between 1986 and 1991. The proportion has since recovered to 55% but remains lower than the national rate of 62%.

#### *Labour force participation*

- Pacific people's labour force participation is lower than that of the total population at all ages for both sexes.

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<sup>34</sup> Source: Statistics New Zealand (available on [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz)).

- Unemployment rates for Pacific peoples are more than double those of New Zealand Pakeha at 7.6%, while for New Zealand Pakeha the rate is 3.2% (March 2006).

#### *Income and salary levels*

- All of the Pacific people's median incomes were \$17,000 and less in 2001, compared with the New Zealand median income of \$18,500.
- Seven percent of Pacific people received over \$40,000 in 2001, compared with 18% of the national population.
- In 2001, 69% of Pacific people earning wages and salaries received less than the national median of \$14.00 per hour. The younger age structure of the Pacific population is a contributing factor as young people tend to have lower incomes.

#### *Housing*

The proportion of Pacific people living in housing owned by a member of their household has decreased from 51% in 1986 to 38% in 2001.

- The proportion of Pacific people living in rental housing increased from 49% in 1996 to 59% in 2001. Nationally, the proportion rose from 22% in 1996 to 29% in 2001.

The crisis evidenced by these outcomes for Pacific peoples and Samoans in the criminal justice system, education, employment, income and housing must be addressed urgently, and successful strategies and remedies require different approaches than those that have usually been applied.

The So'o between Afeafe o Vaetoeafaga and Hoani Waititi Marae as a pilot drawing on Samoan values, culture and knowledge is arguably one way of approaching the disparity gap that affects Pacific populations in New Zealand.

#### **The Vision: The So'o and Restoring Cultural Learning**

Research on social inequality and cultural incapacitation tends to suggest that events that enhance cultural pride and identity are key ways to begin a process of cultural renewal. Redressing the balance is not always something the dominant culture is best able to do, since in fact it is more important that the power and pride of the subordinate culture are enhanced from inside. Some of the complicating 'ailments' caused by migration and poverty are loss of secure sense of belonging, loss of cultural literacy and a disrupted sense of wellbeing. These losses, if left unresolved, impede the progress of many young Pacific people towards social and economic equality and may lead to tragic outcomes.

Restoring cultural and social capacity involves equipping people, and especially young people, with a set of values that will strengthen their confidence, participation and contribution to New Zealand's social, cultural and economic life.

This So'o was based on an innovation – a culturally-driven strategy to address the social and economic developmental lag within Pacific communities. The project vision was to contribute to building and restoring cultural capacity.

Some of the outcomes of the So'o itself were an increase in the sense of belonging, cultural and social literacy, and accordingly wellbeing, as indicated by the participants in their self-report evaluations. The Samoan participants learnt ways to connect and link as a collective community with each other in respectful and safe ways. The So'o between Afeafe o Vaetoeafaga and Hoani Waititi Marae therefore provides a model of the sorts of renewal,

health and vibrancy that can increase Samoan cultural and social capacity in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Photo: Loudeen Parsons

The Kura kaupapa o Hoani Waititi and the Samoan children gather for lunch in the marquee extension to the dining room

## **The So’o and its Contributing Strand**

There are six strands to the So’o project of pride. All are illustrative of the Samoan concept of connectedness, and the enrichments that grew out of the renewal of connections between Maori and Samoans.

Strand 1: Preparations for the So'o – planning activities and contributions

Strand 2: Contributions of the visiting panel of cultural consultants and practitioners

Strand 3: Bringing Samoans together – a three-day fono held in South Auckland

Strand 4: Bringing Samoans and Maori together – the So’o at Hoani Waititi Marae

Strand 5: The So’o as expression of Samoan cultural values

Strand 6: Evaluation by the participants

### **Strand 1: Preparations for the So’o – Planning Activities and Contributions**

Hoani Waititi gave their invitation to the aiga of Puluotu Taimalieutu Tamasese, and Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi accepted the invitation as leader. The vision was discussed among matai and elders so they could share the vision with participants.

Participants from Samoa, Wellington, Tokoroa and Auckland were engaged in many hours of preparations for the So’o, involving organising cultural performances, speakers, training materials and specific clothing for the rituals; arranging practices for the children’s cultural celebration evening; searching for funding and resources; planning for hospitality and how to prepare the venue; and deciding how to support all the other strands.

Afeafe o Vaetoefaga, Samoa, worked together with representatives from Asau, Savaii, to carry out research on the values, narratives, chants and symbols of Faasamoa and the Aga i fanua o Asau in order to prepare for the visit to New Zealand. A common goal was to make the So’o as inclusive and culturally enriching as possible.

It was vital to prepare and source background materials needed for the regional Samoan fono so that all of the participants could share in the cultural materials, and to restore language elements, stories, legends, myths and histories including solo, pese and chant to present day memory. Without such commitment, they will not be passed on to the younger generation and to the children. It was necessary to source materials for the fono and So’o training within Samoa and Aotearoa, including materials on Maori and Samoan historic connections.

## **Strand 2: Contributions of the Visiting Panel of Cultural Consultants and Practitioners**

Guided by the Tu ma Aga faasamoa, faia, ma So’otaga vavalalata, the visiting panel from Asau was asked to direct the restoration of rituals, protocols and symbols of connection.

The Samoan panel bore much of the responsibility for the research, preparation and putting together of rituals, protocols and enactments. They shared both their knowledge and practical skills, and presented music, chant, pese, solo and poetry that were thought to have been forgotten, and gave guidance on artifacts, enactments and ceremonial wear. They taught so’o participants through performance and finally by producing a recorded resource of ancient songs for distribution. Their involvement as cultural consultants for the so’o allowed the teaching and observance of strict protocols.

The visiting cultural consultants were embodiments of the value of cultural knowledge as a route to economic success. For example, they have chosen to work collectively to revitalise traditional construction skills, and have developed and blended this knowledge with contemporary construction methods in Samoa, successfully constructing contemporary and more traditional buildings within urban as well as village-based settings.

They were thus an ideal group to teach younger Samoans in New Zealand how a group of Samoan people can be given a renewed sense of belonging, skills, knowledge and practices that embody and express their cultural capital, traditions and values.

## **Strand 3: Bringing Samoans Together – The Three-day Fono held in South Auckland**

Samoans from various regional networks linked together in South Auckland for three days to share their knowledge, skills, rituals, protocols and values, and to express the responsibilities and connectedness of relationship.

The participants were able, during the fono, to bring together their rituals of establishing links, of reciprocity and of accountability; with the performance of solo, pese and chant; and the telling of narratives, legends, and mythological and historical stories carried out meaningfully with appropriate cultural clothing and accessories.

In preparation for going to the marae, all of the Samoan participants received training on marae protocols and rituals, including expressions of spirituality, welcome, hospitality and connection with Maori. More athletic participants were helped to prepare for the sporting challenges of kirikiti, lakapi, lape and volleyball matches against Hoani Waititi and, most of all, to win all of the matches against the hosts!

The so’o thus became both a symbol and expression of connectedness between groups scattered by geography but held together by deep cultural bonds.

The administration and facilitation of the project both in Samoa and New Zealand was largely carried out by Afeafe o Vaetoefaga, with limited administrative support by the Family Centre.

## **Strand 4: Bringing Samoans and Maori Together at Hoani Waititi Marae**

Having the So’o at Hoani Waititi Marae allowed Samoan participants to experience the life practices of Maori on the marae. The family-like hospitality that was shared was underpinned by values of respect and reciprocity, aiga, whanaungatanga and wairuatanga.

The paramount experience of the So’o was making connections while at the same time expressing the unique and treasured cultural truths and practices that encapsulate the essence of each culture. While the Samoan and Maori participants came together specifically to connect, they were also secure in their own uniqueness. Publicly, they were able to review the recent past, to acknowledge the need to create other spaces for their relationship to continue and grow, and to affirm their multi-layered sense of connectedness with each other. The face-

to-face relationship encouraged through the So’o enabled Samoan and Maori to share and increase their knowledge about the rituals and protocols of the other that are vital to making connections and links as ‘kin’.

The collectives in Auckland, Wellington and Samoa built on their collective heart and kin-based commitment to the project through times spent in different activities and through learning inspirational stories of past relationships with Maori and with Hoani Waititi Marae.

### **Strand 5: The So’o as Expression of Samoan Cultural Values**

The visiting panel demonstrated examples of appropriate language and the enactment of rituals and made clear the underpinning values of acknowledgment and the rituals of establishing links, reciprocity and accountability. The panel also provided practical demonstrations, for example, of Samoan food preparation while at the marae.

This project, on the Samoan community side in Aotearoa, was led by some matai of Vaimoso, Faleasiu, Nofolii and Moataa. They were assisted by matai of the villages of Upolu and Savaii. This leadership provided oversight over the planning of the project, and helped its management and implementation. They also took a leadership role in recruiting families and community members into the project. Some young untitled men and women took leadership roles in recruiting and training children and young adults into the rituals, language and symbols of the So’o. They also organised and trained youth into sporting teams, and trained young Samoan members of the So’o in cultural performances and traditional songs.

In Samoa, the leadership of the project was provided by matai of Nofolii, Vaimoso and Asau. Leadership of the restoration of traditional songs, chants and the process of gifting was led by the matai of Asau. Leadership in restoring the cultural framework and concepts of So’o and oversight of all the leadership roles and functions, as well as the role of Tapuaiga for the project, was provided by Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi.

The range and nature of unpaid activities in this project, including contributions of the dead, all provided a catalyst for people to gather and a space for mourning. The rituals of acknowledgment and reciprocity ensured that there would be future such enactments. This is the core of the Samoan culture of giving and receiving. The cultural restoration of ancient songs, chants and stories at the So’o contributed to the power of the event, as did the teaching and training of young people in these songs, chants and stories. The organising, catering and fundraising, as well as the organisation of regional pre-So’o gatherings in Aotearoa, and the administration and facilitation of the project, were all carried out as part of the commitment to the So’o goal, as unpaid activities.

The motivating factors for this project included the following:

- increasing cultural and social capital of Samoans in New Zealand;
- remembering and storing connections with Maori into the future;
- building on cultural pride;
- transmitting Samoan cultural values and communal connections to youth;
- increasing family and community involvement as well as increasing the involvement of children and their parents.

The key motivation for the project in Auckland was contributed by the young people themselves who exercised the power of their ‘*kidfluence*’. The young people wanted to meet with each other and learn ancient Samoan songs and accompanying Samoan dances. Through their kidfluence, children pressured their parents to bring them to the practices so they could

see their cousins, aunt, uncles or grandparents. The kidfluence led to adults setting up family lunches during the weekends in the 12-week lead-up to the So'o.

The communities in Samoa, Auckland and Wellington were also committed to transmitting the old songs, dances, stories, skills and language to the younger generation, thereby increasing cultural capacity of themselves and the younger generation.

### **Strand 6: Participants' Experience of the So'o**

Objectivity is for uncommitted gods. My commitment will not allow me to confine myself to so narrow a vision. So vast, so fabulously varied a scatter of islands, nations, cultures, mythologies and myths, so dazzling a creature, Oceania deserves more than an attempt at mundane fact; only the imagination in free flight can hope ... if not to contain her – to grasp some of her shape, plumage and pain. (Wendt, 1982, p. 202)

This quotation captures the breadth and richness involved in trying to give voice to the Pacific experience, and specifically to the So'o and its impact on the lives of Maori and Samoan people who participated. An attempt to record participants' experience cannot be detached and dispassionate; rather, it is a process of reflection, an appreciative enquiry into the usefulness or otherwise, the strengths and weaknesses, of making links and enlivening cultural connections.

This process of inquiry and exploration is both public and personal and poses a key question, '*O le a ea se aoga ole nei So'o ia te au ma lou aiga ma ou tagata?*' (How valuable was the So'o for the development of our peoples?).

The responses to this and other questions make public the learning that the participants identified in themselves and shared with people close to them. The process of mapping the experience of the So'o was carried out four weeks after the event.

Self-report forms were distributed to So'o participants, both Maori and Samoan, in Tamaki Makaurau, Ponake and Samoa. All the age groups and gender groups that attended the So'o were encouraged to complete the forms. Seventy percent of the forms were returned. Their completion stimulated conversations and reflections about the So'o and its impacts on the lives of those who participated.

Eleven questions were asked in relation to the So'o:

1. the value of the So'o;
2. to what extent the So'o increased their pride in, and knowledge and understanding of Maoritanga;
3. to what extent the So'o increased their pride in, and knowledge and understanding of FaaSamoa;
4. whether the So'o enhanced their skill levels in Maoritanga;
5. whether the So'o enhanced their skill levels in FaaSamoa;
6. whether the So'o enhanced their knowledge of the histories and relationships between Maori and Samoans;
7. to what extent the So'o helped Maori and Samoan participants to relate to each other better;
8. ways in which the So'o helped participants think about being successful socially and economically;
9. any skills/knowledge/learning they gained from the So'o that could be transferred to other areas of their lives;
10. what they enjoyed about Hoani Waititi Marae and Waitakere City;



11. any other comments or suggestions.

### **1. The Value of the So'o**

The majority of the participants found the So'o excellent because it established, restored or revitalised historical, genealogical and cultural links and connections between Maori and Samoans and within the wider context of Polynesia:

*'The main reason is that the whole experience of the So'o was memorable. The feeling of pride and passion for not only our Samoan culture but also embracing Maoritanga and identifying similar aspects of both cultures. Also gaining knowledge from our Maori family and communicating as one people. Tangata Pasifika' (SF26/24)*

*'Because I have learnt a lot about my culture that I never knew, especially because I am New Zealand-born, but also about the Maoris, how I understand their culture and I was very happy to meet my cousins' (SF40/18).*

The values of the So'o were transmitted to the young people through the lived experience of being accepted and honoured, and it provided the impetus to restore ancient Samoan songs that are valuable and sacred resources:

*'It was the first time I have had the chance to perform so many of our ancient songs and have so many people understand the value of this' (SM04/52).*

The So'o was also perceived to be valuable because it motivated Samoan and Maori to stay engaged:

*'Maua lau award. Fiafia I le mafutaga ma Maoli' (SF17/60)*

*'I didn't want to leave the Marae and everyone seem to get along with each other' (SF64/29).*

### **2. To what extent the So'o increased their pride in, and knowledge and understanding of Maoritanga**

The majority of Samoan participants indicated that the So'o increased their pride in, knowledge and understanding of Maoritanga. About half of Maori participants agreed.

### **3. To what extent the So'o increased their pride in, and knowledge and understanding of Faasamoa**

In this case, the vast majority of Samoans felt that their cultural experience had been enriched by the So'o, whereas only about half of Maori participants agreed.

### **4. Whether the So'o enhanced their skill levels in Maoritanga**

About half of the Samoan and Maori participants thought that the So'o increased their knowledge of, and understanding and appreciation of Maori culture, ceremonies, rituals, language, enactments and waiata. This in turn enabled a realisation of similarities as well as a deep appreciation of the uniqueness of each culture. It was identified that while the Maori and Samoan ceremonies of respect and acknowledgement are informed by similar values and rationale, the expressions and practices are unique and specific to each culture.

The So'o also increased Samoan respondents' appreciation of Maori family structures and primary family relationships, including the familial connection between Maori and Pacific peoples.

The majority of respondents identified an increased knowledge, appreciation, comprehension and usage of Maori language. Both Samoans from Samoa and New Zealand-resident Samoans reported that they were able to understand and interpret some Maori words in both whaikoorero and conversations. Some older respondents who are fluent in Samoan said that they were able to understand and follow Maori speeches and conversations.

The respondents pointed to the So'o providing a face-to-face contact with Maori people that increased knowledge and appreciation of and respect for Maori struggles to restore and maintain language and culture. This respect is deepened by the visibility of the commitment to pass these on to the present generation and therefore to the future.

### **5. Whether the So'o enhanced their skill levels in FaaSamoa?**

The So'o enabled Maori and Samoan people to come together and to build connections and relationships, both through an experience of mutual respect and through the performance of traditional songs and dances that expressed genealogical connections between the two. Witnessing the beauty and being in awe of the enactments of cultural rituals enabled the participants to reflect on their own and to see the beauty in those of the other:

*'Confirmed we can be together like aiga with another Polynesian culture'*

*'If you don't know your roots you are nothing in this world'.*

The So'o enhanced the participants' skill levels in Samoan traditional songs and dances, and empowered the participants with performance skills in speech making, dancing and Samoan games. The traditional songs and dances revitalised the relationships and values expressed in ancient songs and chants, at the same time exposing the participants to Samoan thought, concepts and values.

The participants were able to appreciate the vitality of Samoan language and culture in relation to other languages and cultures, and to gain Samoan language skills:

*'Ua ou iloa ai e taua foi la tatou aganuu I le va, fafo ma isi gagana'*

*'It was great to learn more in-depth faasamoa, the reasons of why different protocols and processes occur in different ways. As why the ava takes place, hearing especially the language in respectful terms'*

*'My grandchildren were able to learn more and they were happy'.*

### **6. Whether the So'o enhanced their knowledge of the histories and relationships between Maori and Samoans**

The vast majority of those who answered this question thought the So'o enhanced people's knowledge and awareness of the relationships between Maori and Samoans and therefore changed their perceptions of each other and strengthened their connections:

*'It was important to hear the histories between Maori and Samoa. Why our cultures are similar and also we intertwine with each other. We believe in similar values and beliefs.'*

The sense of connection and relationship was expressed in shared cultural and linguistic elements, such as the songs, chants and oratory that told stories of navigation from the northern Pacific – and possibly Samoa – to Aotearoa:

*'E pei ona taua o loo I ai le faamaoniga o maoli ma Samoa na folau mai I Aotearoa nei'.*

The So’o enhanced the relationships between Maori and Samoan by providing a space where people were:

*‘Able to talk to one another’*

*‘Reminded of how family can help each other’.*

### **7. To what extent the So’o helped Maori and Samoan participants relate to each other better**

Over half of those who filled in the form felt that the So’o had enhanced the ways they related to each other, via protocol, language, ceremonies, performance and informal social activities that were also redolent with cultural values such as tautau or serving others.

The So’o became a place where the values of hospitality and respect were acted out, and the marae also provided opportunities for Maori and Samoan to work together and to express the values inherent in whanaungatanga and aiga:

*‘To understand the likeness of history between Maori and Samoan. The whanaungatanga of mixing together. To be aware of Samoan and Maori protocol. To feel the marae Maoritanga of each other overcome these feelings in order to have a more positive healing approach to the world around us’.*

### **8. Ways in which the So’o helped participants think about being successful socially and economically**

The So’o changed Samoan and Maori participants’ cultural, social and economic perspectives and enlarged the terrain of possibilities and activities. By helping them gain a positive outlook and to have pride in their cultures, the So’o exposed participants to a sense of commonality and mutual support, and to ideas about social and economic development.

Positive change was evident in young people talking about doing well at school, and in older people talking about economic development:

*‘It helped me build my confidence and learn more stuff’*

*‘Our culture teaches us to build Samoan fale, we can perform and we can teach others about these gifts’*

*‘Ia iloa o tatou tagata iai mafai ona latou aoaoina nei foi o latou mea taulima faapena I latou siva’*

*‘Fou le mafai ona siva I luma o fafata, e le masani, faateleina le loloto tele’*

*‘Malosi, fiafia, fealofani, mafutaga’.*

### **9. Any skills/knowledge/learning they gained from the So’o that could be transferred to other areas of their lives**

The transferable skills and abilities that people gleaned from the So’o included a feeling of connectedness, cultural knowledge, listening skills, a clear understanding of values and protocols, language skills, traditional material skills such as cooking and weaving, and a sense of cultural pride:

*‘The importance of learning your own culture of why we have been raised the way we have been. It all leads back to the love we have for our family’*

*‘Leadership, teaching, teo Reo, whanaungatanga, cultural awareness’*

*'Va fealoai/masani e tautala I luma o tagata'*

*'Va ma tagata matutua'*

*'Amio'.*

### **10. What they enjoyed about Hoani Waititi Marae and Waitakere City**

The participants enjoyed many things about Hoani Waititi Marae, including the excellent facilities, such as the kitchens, the dining areas, the open spaces, the school buildings, the sports facilities and the swimming pool:

*'Excellent! The marae was beautiful and so was the food. The Maoris were well prepared and everything was done properly, they went out of their way. The facilities were looked after very well'*

*'School building for Maori to learn their own language and cultures'*

*'Faatauaina o Aoga ma le faaaogaina o le gagana'*

*'The park so we can often see kirikiti being played. The venue is beautiful. The new buildings are very fine.'*

But over and above an appreciation of the physical surroundings was an appreciation for the beauty of the place and the feeling of it:

*'Their hospitality, when they get together it's like being with family. The park is very good, and it was very good to see the children (Maori) close by.'*

### **11. Any other comments or suggestions**

The most overwhelming response was for another So'o that would be even bigger and better, and could perhaps occur in Samoa.

The So'o was generally regarded as a positive learning experience:

*'Malie atoatoa lou nei tagata'*

*'Maori people were really kind to us and we had a great relationship with them'*

*'We should thank them with all our love'*

*'Very blessed to be there'.*

## **Conclusion**

The So'o project gives expression to the reconnection of relationships, in this case motivated or initiated by a death, which is a fitting metaphor for the Samoan sense of relationship and connectedness that is not bound by time or space.

As a strategy for developing a model to explore and facilitate such exchanges, the So'o was almost entirely funded by unpaid work and on the basis of cultural obligation, family commitment and 'alofa'/aroha.

The So'o also demonstrated that many of the resources needed to increase wellbeing to reduce the impacts of the 'ailments' caused by migration and poverty are resources Samoans freely share. In fact, the knowledge needed to restore cultural and social capacity for Samoans largely resides within the cultural knowledge resources of Samoans. What is needed

additionally are partnerships that will bring other resources to support the implementation of this knowledge for the benefit of all, including Samoans and those with whom they forge relationships, and events and structures that support the expression and passing on of this cultural knowledge.

## **Summary**

This summary sets out a response by this case study and project of pride for Samoa to the research questions.

### **Values and meaning systems that underpin views of volunteering and social practices**

The Samoan people both in New Zealand and Samoa have had a connection with Hoani Waititi Marae since it was opened in 1980. That relationship was renewed once again in 2003 through the funeral and in 2004 through the commemoration of Fineaso Taimalieutu Pulotu. These rituals brought the Samoan community and the extended Tamasese family, led by Afioga Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, face to face again with Maori, through the leadership of Dr Pita Sharples.

For the Samoans, the presence, participation and leadership of Afioga Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi was all that was required to bring forth their own participation, and to make them take up their responsibilities and the giving of contributions. He as the matai of an expansive network of aiga collectives makes his own contributions through his role, leadership, eldership, and the identification of the ideological cultural framework within which to understand Samoan values, how they are enacted in relationship, and a world view that attends to responsibilities. It was his call first for the funeral and then for the So'o at Hoani Waititi Marae that rallied the Samoan community: his leadership can therefore be regarded as a catalyst for communal action, and as an embodiment of FaaSamoa.

The So'o contains within it the values of connectedness, reciprocity and mutuality that may be called volunteering in a different context. It is also a ritualised celebration of connection between two parties and thus provides a structure for the delivery of activities and behaviours that express connectedness, in which the self is relational, and wellbeing for all is the goal.

The concept of so'o is based on remembering and acknowledging acts of connection to a past and committing these connections to the memories of the young. Relationships and connections are thereby preserved because they can go on to be lived and celebrated by younger generations. So'o then is a valuable cultural concept that can aid the restoration and revitalisation of Samoan and Pacific communities resident in New Zealand.

### **What is the range and nature of unpaid activities in which participants engage?**

This project of pride, the So'o between Afeafe o Vaetoeafaga and Hoani Waititi Marae, involved two partner agencies. Each of the partners carried out a range of unpaid activities in preparation for the So'o.

**Afeafe o Vaetoeafaga** carried out the cultural research into the relevant pieces of knowledge in Samoa. They prepared the artifacts and materials for cultural enactments that would be contributed to Hoani Waititi. Gifts of acknowledgment were prepared in Samoa.

A special contribution was made by the cultural panel from Samoa, many from Asau, in Savaii. They provided the abundant cultural presentations, mats, Siapo Tapa, carved umeke and pate. The travel costs and preparations in Samoa were largely met by Afeafe o Vaetoeafaga.

Regional Samoan networks and aiga across New Zealand participated in and contributed to the preparations for hosting the visiting Samoan group of Afeafe o Vaetoefaga at a separate venue for two days prior to the So'o with Hoani Waititi Marae. Similar to the Afeafe o Vaetoefaga group, the New Zealand-based Samoans carried out sao or gathering of contributions for the So'o according to the levels set by the leadership group.

An important group that carried out its own preparations were the children of the regional networks who gathered in Auckland. The children exercised their own kind of *kidfluence* by motivating their parents to ensure they got to practices and meetings so that they could spend time with their expanding aiga network of cousins and learn their contributions to the So'o together.

**Hoani Waititi Marae** whanau made generous contributions as gracious hosts. They prepared the marae for hosting 150 Samoans and the same number of Maori. Many of the marae whanau assisted with facilitating the So'o programme, recording, cooking, cleaning, gardening and participating. The marae and the kura kaupapa buildings were prepared with all that was necessary. The Hoani Waititi Marae was also the venue for many of the preparatory meetings.

### **Terms, concepts and associated models that best capture the nature of unpaid activities for Samoan people in this project of pride**

The young people talked of service tautua, respecting others' faaloalo and fesoasoani, assisting emotionally, physically and monetarily. The elders spoke of the concepts of aiga or extended family and connections or So'o. All these concepts entail responsibilities and connections that restore wellbeing or meet a specific need.

The concepts of tofi means to have the responsibility to empower and assist each other and to make a contribution is to fesoasoani which is premised on the meaning that we are moved by a sense of alofa. These concepts often motivate and sustain Samoan actions of alofa towards others as collectives. Relationships were restored and an increased sense of belonging was activated through participation.

Faia and aia, sao, faasoa all presume abundance and willingness to contribute within relationships.

The physical presence of Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi means a commitment to leadership that is present at critical times within the aiga to bring comfort, hope or direction.

### **Motivations for Samoan peoples to engage in unpaid community activities**

A prime motivator for Samoan people is their sense of responsibility to their collective and extended aiga and the commitment to create wellbeing within the aiga. Their dedication to the leadership then reinforces their contributions. The relational Samoan self who feels the vulnerabilities of others will respond because of the relationship.

Another motivator is the sense of commitment to their aiga leadership or matai who may encourage participation in specific tasks or contributions. The sense of belonging to a collective aiga is also a consequence of participation. Participation promotes the transmission of Samoan language, values and relationships to the young who in turn will exercise their own responsibilities to pass on language ability, values and relationships.

The So'o between Afeafe o Vaetoefaga and Hoani Waititi Marae is an example of the restoration of connections and belonging that can support Samoan young people to bridge the socio-economic and educational lag that is experienced by many Samoan families in New Zealand.

**What are the impacts of voluntary activity on Pacific peoples and/or their families?**

As demonstrated by the So'o, the impact of all the voluntary contributions was the ability to reconnect and restore the historical and mutually supportive relationships between Samoan and Maori back into living memory. The younger participants were also strengthened by this knowledge so that they were able to navigate more positively their daily encounters with and attitudes to young Maori. Young Maori and Samoans then through their participation in the So'o were enabled to take into their futures new levels of respect for each other.

The contributions made by aiga to each other both in New Zealand and in Samoa strengthened their mutually supportive and caring relationships within the wider Samoan community and across the Pacific region more generally.

## **PART FOUR: THE FAFALETUI FOCUS GROUPS**

### **Faafaletui Focus Group Approach**

While the case studies describe Pacific projects of pride and reveal a range of understandings of voluntary activity and of cultural obligations, they do this mostly because of what people *do*, rather than what they *say*. The case studies, as well as being valuable in themselves, are *illustrative* of volunteering and cultural obligation, and provide an *experiential* account of this behaviour. The focus groups, on the other hand, encourage more analysis and identification of the beliefs, values, motivations and activities that underpin, accompany and inform volunteerism and cultural obligation, and are thus *analytical* and attempt to find *meaning* in the behaviour. They also begin to try to find language that captures the complexity of this behaviour so that a more accurate elaboration of the New Zealand Census question may be identified and policy recommendations made.

### **The Methodology**

Methodologically, the eighteen Faafaletui focus groups follow the style of the fono and are thus appropriate to the cultural context of this research.

There were two focus groups for each of six Pacific countries: Tokelau, Fiji, Niue, Tonga, Cook Islands and Samoa. In addition to these 12 groups, there were six pan-Pacific focus groups that included Pacific peoples from countries not covered by the study.

Focus groups were arranged according to age, with an elders' group and young people's group for each of the specific countries as well as the pan-Pacific focus groups. Younger participants ranged from 18 to 35 years of age, and elders from 35 years of age.

All focus groups were further sub-divided into gender-specific groupings to enable the exploration of the gendered nature of cultural obligations and volunteering during discussion.

The selection process thus ensured the engagement of participants from a range of ages and a balance of genders.

Participants were selected with support from a number of organisations and groups, including the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and the Pacific Reference Faafaletui Group.

The focus groups were located in the main cities of Aotearoa New Zealand, with a few in other locations such as Levin or Hastings.

The interviews and focus groups were audio-taped and transcribed in the language that was used in the interview. The transcripts were then analysed in the language of the interview or focus group and themes were identified.

In each focus group, the facilitator's role was first to give a brief description of the research project, and then loosely to guide discussion, gather clear and useful responses, and allow and encourage participants to develop and express their own concepts and meanings.

### **Faafaletui Focus Group Sessions**

The Faafaletui focus groups were broken into four two-hour sessions. In each group, the participants and facilitators began by introducing themselves to each other. The material covered in those sessions is described below.



### *Session 1*

The questions used to focus discussion during this session were designed to begin an analysis of the self, relationships, the nature and expression of cultural obligations and volunteering, and the values and motivations associated with cultural obligations and volunteering. The object was to investigate the issues, themes and experiences of participants' conceptions of cultural obligations and volunteering.

### *Session 2*

The second session focused on changes in Pacific conceptions and understandings of cultural obligations and volunteering brought about by the introduction of Western models, thus also throwing up a clearer conception of the cultural elements that have changed.

### *Session 3*

This session involved the presentation of the findings of the literature review, and was designed to elicit responses to current cultural obligations and volunteering data.

### *Session 4*

The final session enquired into the extent and nature of voluntary and unpaid activities within Pacific communities.

## **What the Focus Groups Showed**

The focus group sessions obliquely and sometimes specifically revealed the meanings and value Pacific people attach to the activities described in the case studies. They provided analysis of a Pacific sense of self, of the significance and importance of relationships, and of the associated values of reciprocity and mutuality. They also address the issues of driving forces and motivation, and provided a sense of the inner meaning of volunteering and cultural obligation. Throughout the investigations it became clear that these notions are embedded in a particular Pacific sense of wellbeing, and reflect and are reflected in the values that underpin reciprocal relationships and contributions.

The focus groups also examined the changes wrought by cultural and social change, the roles of men and women in relation to volunteering, and the ways in which cultural obligations and volunteering are expressed in both a Pacific and New Zealand setting. The goal was to show the ways in which such activities may be more accurately identified and measured in the New Zealand context.

## **The Meaning of Cultural Obligations and Volunteering**

### **The Context: Pacific Self and Relationships**

Pacific cultural obligation and volunteering can only be understood within a context that includes two major notions of self – the first self and the relational self – in which relationship, as a state of being, emerges as paramount. It informs and contains not only any sense of consciousness and identity but also any sense of wellbeing, safety and meaning.

### **The First Self: Genealogy, Environment and Sacred Space**

Both elders' and young people's Faafaletui revealed the self as being identified primarily by its genealogical and cultural connections, both biological and adoptive, and its maternal and paternal lineages:

*'Our hair, our skin, the foods we eat, our cultural beliefs' (FFG11)*

*'Having Cook Island blood' (FFG8)*

*'Having blood connections to Tonga' (FFG9)*

*'blood ...' (FFG 11).*

These lineages also connect the present generation to the spirit world of the ancestors, and invariably to the land and the waters from which they come: it is said that the human self is a descendant of the land and/or the sea. The self is thus also defined by its 'places of belonging' from which one's genealogical lines originate or in which they are located, including villages, motu, whenua/fanua or ele'ele:

*'In our kind of culture, aiga is very important. We are connected to each other and our persons are defined by these connections' (FFG1)*

*'having deep feelings about Niue as home' (FFG4)*

*'you are identified with your islands on your mum or your dad's side' (FFG8)*

*'our sense of belonging, our relationships' (FFG11).*

The self that relates through genealogy to ancestors and to the land and the waters also relates through genealogy to the God(s) or Atua. These connections to the ancestors, to the land, to the waters and to Atua exist in the space that relates and connects – the va. This space that connects humans to the ancestors, the land, the waters and Atua is tapu or sacred, and is called va tapuia or veitapu (from the word tapu meaning sacred),<sup>35</sup> which is the sacred space that relates and defines. The self therefore draws its sense of sacredness from the tapu relationships in which it is located:

*'Relationships between a brother and sister are guarded by veitapu' (FFG3)*

*'relationships between matai and auaiga, parents and children, sisters and brothers are protected by va, which is the space which relates and protects; and va tapuia, which is the space that relates, which is sacred' (FFG1).*

### **The Relational Self**

The first self is redolent with connections that radiate cyclically through time, space and the spiritual realm: this sense of self is clearly, constantly and multi-dimensionally relational. When Pacific people talk about the self, therefore, they are not referring to an individual self that operates as a discrete unit, but are most likely to be speaking of relationships, connections and inter-connections, for example, to aiga, magafaoa, kainga, group, clan, village, motu, province, confederacy and country:

*'The Samoan self is defined by relationships within our aiga and relationships to aiga' (FFG1)*

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<sup>35</sup> Va Tapuia – Ole Taeao Afua.

*'Fijians also identify themselves from what village they come from, their family, their island that they come from, the provinces that they come from and also from the confederacy that they belong to' (FFG5)*

*'Things that we value ..., our family, and our magafaoa .... We learn from our parents and from their parents and parents before them ...' (FFG4).*

The focus groups found that these family forms are the base organising and interrelating structures that define roles and responsibilities for care and support of their members throughout their lives and at their significant life events, e.g. birth, childhood, eldership and death:

*'We are taught from young, we grew up as children learning how to enable each other at times when we need each others' help' (FFG 1).*

*' ... I'm going back to look after my Nan in Tokelau .... my Nan hasn't got a daughter there to help her out .... I had to stand up and took upon myself ... to do it' (FFG12F)*

The self in relationship has certain elements: emotional, spiritual, physical, mental and, in New Zealand, cultural. All these elements are interrelated and cannot be separated. Together they constitute the whole self in relationship. The responsibility to care for and support aiga or members of new aiga formations therefore includes care at the emotional, spiritual, physical, mental and, in New Zealand, cultural levels:

*'the way we support each other emotionally, physically, spiritually' (FFG1).*

The self that exists in relationships with elements of the emotional, the spiritual, the physical, the mental and, in New Zealand, the cultural is inclined towards selflessness. Selflessness in this sense means that the self exists in relationships and collectivities; it is not separate from them and is not an entity on its own. Rather, the self in relationship is oriented towards consideration and thoughtfulness for those with whom it is in relationship. The focus is on the relationships and the servicing of those rather than on the individuated self. Further, the concept of selflessness focuses attention on others with whom one is in relationship and on the nature of that relationship rather than on the individuated self.

This concept of selflessness is reflected in the Christian and biblical traditions that are so central to life in the Pacific, and the language used to describe selflessness often reflects that of the scriptures and other Christian writings:

*'The self is subdued ... and the collective is highlighted' (FFG6)*

*'you work for your family, your village and Tokelau' (FFG6)*

*'It's to do with service, giving from your heart, not because you have to, you give what you can; Christian tradition supports and interrelates with volunteering' (FFG7)*

*'... putting your self last' (FFG7).*

However, there are words in all Pacific languages that may be regarded as encapsulating traditional and endemic values and beliefs. Some are less easily adapted and adopted by Christian terminology, for example, the concept of the au in Tokelau that is the name for an organ in the body of parents within which love and generosity dwell:

*'Our deep insights, our Au, our selves' (FFG6).*

Other words such as alofa, alowha, aroa, loloma, 'ofa and fakalofa are primary expressions of the relational self that in English, as the Faafaletui of elders and young people pointed out, are translated as love, respect, reverence and value, all of which have cultural meaning:

*'alofa is guided by our cultural structures which provides guidelines on who, how and when we express alofa to each other' (FFG1).*

Alofa, alowha, aroa, loloma, 'ofa and fakalofa are also premised on face-to-face relationships or being in the presence of the other. These face-to-face relationships involve being 'present' to each other emotionally, spiritually, physically, mentally and, in New Zealand, culturally with those with whom one is in relationship. Within these relationships, people may act supportively towards each other at times of vulnerability or at significant life events. The selves in relationship are thus *'re membered'*, or in other words, exist principally in the acting out of relational behaviour and the expression of relational feelings. The actions of support or alofa therefore become actions of remembering, actions that are in turn responded to and reciprocated respectfully, but that have life first of all in the relational self:

*'The Samoan word alofa is premised on the word 'alo' which is to stay in face-to-face relationship' (FFG1)*

*'Tongan people caring for our neighbour ... having a big heart' (FFG3)*

*'to stay in face-to-face relationship or to be present to ... not always meaning to be physically present to ... but to be present in thought' (FFG1).*

The self in relationship with its elements of the emotional, spiritual, physical, mental and, in New Zealand, the cultural, internalises relationships, experiences, passions, and alofa, alowha, aroha, loloma, 'ofa and fakalofa. Not only is the self moved to respond to the visible vulnerabilities of the others with whom one is in relationship, but the self is also moved to respond because these relationships have become internalised and thus motivate a response:

*'If the ultimate love ['ofa] resides in us, there will be no trouble in maintaining the survival of our community spirit into the future' (FFG3)*

*'the self then is the internalised relationships with everyone in the aiga structure' (FFG1).*

The selves that relate in aiga or new aiga formations have assigned roles and responsibilities, which are tied to entitlements and access. These responsibilities include the provision of food, shelter and clothing, as well as spiritual and ceremonial supports. The fulfillment of these roles and responsibilities brings a sense of self-worth and wholeness:

*'when we have the ability to make a sao and fulfill our responsibilities ... we are well' (FFG1).*

### **Relational Self and Family Structures**

The selves connected in aiga, magafaoa, kainga, group, clan and families are located in structures that are unique to each Pacific nation. These structures are connected or related through genealogy to other family structures, assigning roles, responsibilities and status as well as providing a frame for daily family rituals and ceremonies of significant life events:

*'Status in relation to others sets protocols for kava ceremonies and for cooking ...' (FFG5)*

*'In the Cook Islands there is a daily cycle – after school you go to the plantation, then do some studies, then the boys feed the pigs, the girls go and collect the rubbish and do the girls' work ... this has been repeated and it's just passed on from generation to generation' (FFG2).*

Family structures in Pacific nations are elaborate and give prominence to the place of ancestors, elders, leaders and, in some nations, sisters. They determine primary familial relationships, which may be between grandparents and grandchildren, matai and aiga, parents and children, or sisters and brothers. These structures are built upon the interconnection between each of the roles, which in fact defines and informs the role and determines its inherent responsibilities. There are clear protocols or guidelines for etiquette, behaviour and a conglomerate sense of self and relationship at both the intra-familial and inter-familial levels. The roles and responsibilities are lifelong and sometimes intergenerational, and the protocols of relating that are embedded in them ensure social safety for all those in relationship:

*'you have learned all the knowledge from the kitchen through to leadership' (FFG4).*

*'It was usual to work in New Zealand, go home, build a house and look after parents' (FFG2).*

Relationships in family structures and especially primary familial relationships, as was mentioned earlier, are protected and connected to each other through the va tapuia or veitapu, in which the first self is dissolved and restored from its aloneness and meaninglessness into connectedness and relationship.

### **Inner Meaning: Reciprocity and Mutuality**

The va, in which the relational self is connected to the ancestors, the land, the waters and Atua, is a space of non-time and non-place. It is both a container, in that it holds, nurtures and allows; and a catalyst, in that it permits growth, movement and change. It is not unidirectional, in which case a cause would lead to an effect, or in other words, that an act would bring about reward or punishment. As such, the concept of the va encapsulates much that is relevant to a Pacific sense of cultural obligation and volunteering.

This sense is hard to capture in English. Words like 'obligation' and 'reciprocity' include ideas that are linear, consequential and rules-based. There is an implied sense of duty and an equally implied sense of entitlement. A way of approaching a Pacific sense of cultural obligation and volunteering is to examine the concepts of time – chronological and linear, and cyclical and relational; and the concept of subsistence. This will take us inside reciprocity and allow the notion of mutuality to emerge more clearly.

### **Time: Chronological and Linear/ Cyclical and Relational**

Chronological or linear time constrains relationships and artificially constricts or transforms cycles. It measures and quantifies time and thus the past can be separated from the present, which in turn can be separated from the future. In chronological or linear time, the intimate connections between time and the cycles of nature and the circles of life and death are severed. This severance distorts the natural rhythms of support in reciprocal and mutual arrangements between and amongst relational selves. When time is measured chronologically, relationships and reciprocal and mutual arrangements are subjected to the constricting present and are bounded and limited by it, which automatically reduces, stultifies or destroys them.

Relational or cyclic time, on the other hand, is characterised by connectivity, oneness and an inherent ecological harmony. Time is thus connected to the cycles of nature, the land,

the waters, and plant and sea life. It is also denoted by cycles of birth, death and rebirth, and the upholding and forging of relationships.

Cyclic and relational time incorporates and draws attention to a sense of beginnings, significant life events, periods of coming together and periods that are held in relationship rather than in isolation. The elders' Faafaletui focus group pointed out that:

*'E goto he fetu, kae tu he fetu na mahina ma ona ika' (FFG6)*  
(*'As a navigational star sinks into the horizon, another one rises to take its place. Each season brings its own catch.'*)

Time or periods are thus remembered and denoted by significant life events, for example, the time of courtship, the time of marriage, the birth of children, and deaths and funerals. Relationships and events surrounding them become the markers and quantifiers of time, but always in the sense of continuity and connectedness:

*'When the news of peace in Europe reached Niue, there was much celebrating ... besides speeches and festivities ... every person on the island will plant a coconut and these will serve as a constant reminder of the war and its significance ...' (Niue case study).*

In relational time, ancestors are not dead and gone; rather, they exist in the relational present with their descendants.

In the context of cyclic and relational time, there is not the compulsion or the enforcement to reciprocate in the immediate present; instead, contributions or acts of reciprocity will occur during the period of one's relationships. It is not time that controls relationship or behaviour, i.e. I gave you in the past

Give me in the present

Give me in the future.

Instead, it is the fact that a relationship is established or exists (in the *va*, and in the social world), and that this relationship means that the people involved are inextricably linked. This linkage is not only material – or physical – but also psychic and spiritual. Like cyclical time, it is never-ending, absolute and mysterious. When a Pacific person does something for another, the relationship is nurtured, and the idea of relationship is also nurtured: self and selves all benefit.

Partly because of their deeply spiritual nature, reciprocity and mutuality are expressed in relational, allusive and metaphorical language that refers only obliquely to reciprocal relationships and forms of reciprocity, inviting rather than defining meaning:

*'Fai o faiva o pule, a'o faiva o fa'aalo'alo' (FFG1)*

*(By your authority you have given to us – it is our responsibility and a sign of our respect for you that we reciprocate.)*

### **The Subsistence Economy, Relationships and Contributions**

Relational time embodies the cosmology as it both exists beyond human relationships and is a container for them. In relational time, all parts of human life are kept in a balance of connectivity. Within this, the two concepts of reciprocity and mutuality emerge as expressions of the relational self that are rooted in what has long been the way of life for Pacific peoples, the subsistence economy. This economy is based on balance, ecology, patience and trust. It means that the selves in relationship are able to contribute and reciprocate according to what is available in each of the cycles, throughout the period of the relationships:

*'money didn't determine gifting – we gave pigs and taro' (FFG2)*

*'we contributed with the produce from our plantations, taro or banana ...' (FFG2).*

Subsistence economies are stable and self-sustaining because, by definition, they are based on what is available: availability guides needs, and needs are accommodated by availability. Needs are also supported by the interplay between relationship and availability, so that human relationship mirrors the quality of the va. What is available exists cyclically and variously, and an ebb and flow is maintained that is the norm, sustained by the cycle of mutuality and the cycle of the subsistence economy.

Pacific gender and other relational arrangements are premised in part on the subsistence economy of a Pacific motu and nations. This subsistence economy is in itself premised on the spiritual relationships between the selves and the land and waters.

The present anthropological and economics definition of subsistence economy as a meagre economy disregards the plentiful nature of the lands and waters on which Pacific economies are based. Pacific subsistence economies have been referred to as subsistence affluence, which is characterised by cycles of availability, concepts of conservation and regeneration, and the potential for abundance, with food, crops and materials for livelihood from both the land and the waters accessible and available.

A Faafaletui pointed out that the abundance of the environment on which Pacific subsistence economies are founded brings forth elaborate cultures of sharing and distribution:

*'Our father was a very giving man, loving man. When the Reverend arrives he is the first one there with a bunch of bananas ... he gave the Reverend a plot of land and [told him] plant the land and whatever you get from the land [use it for you and your family]. I was aware how much these ministers had been [given] and I was concerned ... but he taught us one of his biggest lessons and that was the lesson of giving ... you give and you don't expect to be paid. We were closer and worked alongside our father when he called out, "We are going out to the mountain". And we all went with him' (FFG2).*

Pacific subsistence economies are characterised by cycles, for example, agricultural and fishing cycles. There is the time when the mullet rises, and the time of the rising of the igaga (whitebait) and the time of the uga in Niue, the times of the 'fuata' (the season of the ulu, mago, vi), and the times of planting. There is the time when areas of land or waters are not harvested or fished in order for them to regenerate. It is at these times that the relationship between humans and the land and the waters, crops and fish is celebrated by rituals of welcome, distribution and use. In these instances, the first produce went to leaders, elders, sisters or people who held significant status within families and communities:

*'O le talo mua' (FFG15).*

Sometimes it went to visitors:

*'Our best sugar cane was saved for our visitors' (FFG4).*

Abundance and availability are occasionally disrupted by natural disasters such as cyclones that can destroy some crops and may cause oge or times when specific crops are in short supply. It is at these times that people seek assistance from neighbouring villages for certain crops that are needed for regeneration or to replenish the plant stock:

*'Tu'uufi, the song speaks of the search for yam shoots to plant' (So'o case study).*

The so'o structure establishes rituals of connection between the parties who are requesting assistance and the party that is assisting. This structure of request and response does not put one into a lesser position than the other; rather, as a young people's Faafaletui focus group said:

*'Our connections become enlivened and restored through our actions of helping each other' (FFG7).*

### **Inner Meaning: Drivers and Motivators**

In order to enter further into Pacific meanings of cultural obligation and volunteering, it is necessary to try to see what lies behind the sense of self and self-in-relationship, and the interconnectedness between reciprocity and mutuality. Reciprocal behaviour is a reflection of Pacific relationships, in which reciprocity and mutuality are held in balance. This balance is spiritual as well as actual, in that its very existence and continuity are expressions and realisations of its essence: balance is what holds the selves in relationship, and what creates the linkages through time, and space.

Discussion in the focus groups was therefore directed towards verbalising the drivers and motivators for reciprocity and mutuality, in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the meaning of cultural obligation and volunteering in a Pacific setting.

Pacific conceptions of obligations include the following:

- Obligations spring from my identity, my relationships, my role, my responsibility and my heritage.
- That which is to be done is of mutual necessity to both the giver and the receiver.
- That which is to be done is of mutual benefit to both the giver and receiver.
- That which is not done is of mutual harm to both the one who would be the giver and the one who would be the receiver.

Pacific peoples are motivated to fulfill cultural obligations or to be engaged in community activities because they see themselves as related to people and communities. They share a mutual and reciprocal relationship in which their people and their community's welfare and wellbeing are their responsibility:

*'we do things for each other' (FFG5)*

*'Osi aiga' (FFG1)*

*('We support family members because they are part of us.')*

The successes and struggles of family or aiga members are part of the internalised self and consequently bring both pride and challenges to that self. The self is inextricably linked to



both the fortunes and the trials of the aiga or aiga-like formations and therefore the self is motivated by love for these formations:

*'Loto aiga' (FFG1)*  
*('Love of aiga becomes the basis of contributions to aiga.')*

The self located in relationship to the aiga is also located in relationship to the motu, village, province, confederacy and nation. It is the place from which one originates and where one first learnt about alofa. The self is therefore linked to these places of belonging and feels a deep responsibility towards them. In fact, it is the collective identity in motu or nationhood that motivates achievement and striving to protect or further strengthen motu or nationhood:

*'motivation is already there ... it only takes just the name Cook Islands and everybody just goes and does the work' (FFG2)*

*'... Your love in what you do is your cultural obligation. That is what motivates our Fijian people' (FFG5).*

Another motivator for Pacific peoples to be engaged in activities that fulfill relational responsibilities and obligations is that these activities provide an opportunity to meet family members and relatives who live far away, and to re-establish connection and connectedness:

*'I always look forward to having that family gathering because I know that my cousins that live far away or my aunties who I haven't seen for years [will come]. So it's a ... sad occasion but at the same time I am looking forward to seeing [them]' (FFG7).*

Fulfilling cultural obligations is also a time in which Pacific languages are spoken and shared and when cultural skills are transmitted to the younger generation:

*'I think the motivation for me is to see my parents happy and to see my kids [learning] from the role modelling in serving others, and my parents passing down cultural knowledge on mats ... that's what I want my kids to develop ....' (FFG16).*

The enactment of cultural obligations includes knowing the protocols and etiquette that allow people to relate in respectful and safe ways. These protocols and etiquettes guide not only the types but also the ways in which these obligations or responsibilities are enacted.

Pacific peoples realise that they are the present role models and embodiments of the generations that have gone before. They are the teachers for the next generations, part of a cycle of relationship. Responsibility and cultural obligation are taken seriously and motivate both the elders and the generations born in New Zealand to take care to model to the younger generation a confident, responsible and contributing relational self:

*'It's the qualities passed from past generations and they are instilled in us and it's our responsibility to be good role models for the younger ones ...' (FFG7).*

It is in the act of 're-membering', of being relational, of expressing reciprocity and mutuality that a sense of self-worth is created, which in turn confirms and gives voice to spiritual, social and cultural identity. The sense of self-worth for the relational self is thus centred on the ability to contribute and to fulfill commitments and responsibilities. Each – the relational self and the relational actions – is a reflection of the other, and they are bound in a dynamic balance between identity, expression and reflected identity, which creates self-worth. Pacific relational selves are therefore motivated to give materially, financially, emotionally and spiritually in order that responsibilities and obligations are met. Through these actions the

relational self gains confidence, wellbeing and pride, and it could be asserted that the endowment of a sense of wellbeing is sufficient motivation for the behaviours we are calling cultural obligation and volunteering to be sustained. It could appear that sufficient reward creates a self-sustaining cycle, a Pavlovian conditioned response of wellbeing following on from an act of altruism. However, there is another aspect to a Pacific sense of cultural obligation and volunteering that is even deeper and more fundamental than face-to-face relationship and the engendered sense of confidence, wellbeing and pride. Pacific peoples fulfill obligations because they are moved by a sense of *aloha*, *loloma*, *fakalofa*, *'ofa*, *aroa* and *aloha*: the balance created by participation and contribution is based on love, which helps to develop and make more organic the wider society in which all these people live:

*'gaulofa ae le o le gaumatau' (FFG1)*

*('It is fulfilled out of love, not out of fear or compulsion')*

*'e faataunuu ona o le tofi ae le o le tiute' (FFG1)*

*('It is fulfilled out of our heritage and its responsibilities, not out of duty')*

*'Our contributions of love ... and knowledge will help to develop the society we live in' (FFG3).*

### **Self and Selves in Relationship: The Creation of Wellbeing**

We have now established, through the focus group discussions and interviews, a contextual understanding of the self in relationship, and of the environment of the *va*, of cyclical and relational time, and of subsistence-type economies. We have some idea of the inner meaning of reciprocal and mutual behaviours and a sense of what motivates and drives them that takes us further into the heart of what we are referring to as cultural obligation and volunteering.

It is apparent that this is a self- and socially-sustaining system, in which social health and congruency lead to wellbeing, a feeling of safety and a sense of identification, each of which in turn reflects back upon the relational self. Like relational time this system is cyclic; like the *va* it is infinite.

### **Pacific Conceptions of Wellbeing**

Wellbeing is one of the key existential states of the selves in relationship. Wellbeing is closely associated with balance and wholeness and generates social practices that support and assist the alignment of peoples, cultures, lands, seas, languages, families and nations.

Cultural, linguistic, familial and national wellbeing motivates contributions and many projects for the common good. As such, wellbeing is centrally related to Pacific world views and values held about contributions, reciprocal arrangements and mutuality.

Wellbeing is a broad concept that encompasses a life that is lived well and is sustained by relationships, a life that is lived with many blessings, a life that is lived in abundance and in harmony, and a life that is lived in health. Wellbeing is an holistic concept that presupposes wellness in all the relationships in which the self is involved – it cannot exist in isolation:

*'When the aiga is well, one is well' (FFG1)*

*'When one knows the aiga is supported well, one is well' (FFG1).*

The self that relates to the land, waters, *Atua* and through genealogy to the ancestors experiences wellbeing when these relationships are in harmony or are in balance:

*'Wellbeing is making sure you are in balance' (FFG7).*

The burial of the umbilical cord in the earth or the taking of the umbilical cord to the sea ensures that the child has an ongoing relationship to the earth and the sea. And through these

relationships the self finds belonging and security. Hence, belonging is a core concept of wellbeing:

*'Wellbeing is not losing the skills and practices and being familiar and connected to the land and the seas' (FFG2).*

This depth of belonging grounds the self and gives it security in its identity.

Further, the self that relates to other selves in families, motu, villages, provinces, confederacies and nations finds wellbeing when these relationships and connections are in a state of harmony and health, when they are well and being cared for. The self does not experience wellbeing if any of those to which it is related are not well or are not in a state of wellbeing:

*'Wellbeing can be described as our being in unity with our community, with our church, with our group that we are involved with. It's about looking after each other, it's about working together as a team, working together as a province, working together as Fijians in looking after each other, that as a whole for us is wellbeing' (FFG5).*

*'We experience wellbeing from our aiga. We experience ola fiafia from our aiga. When we look after, enable, support, empower our aiga, then we find wellbeing. When the aiga is well you will find wellbeing' (FFG1).*

Thus, the self in relationship to the ancestors and to other people through genealogical connections finds wellbeing when those connections are honoured, respected and protected:

*'valuing our ancestors and what they give' (FFG1).*

The ability to protect the land, the waters, the genealogies and the spiritual connections or heritage is critical to self-worth. The fulfillment of the responsibility to guard and protect brings a sense of honour and therefore of wellbeing:

*'Passing on our cultures and providing for our peoples gives us wellbeing' (FFG1).*

The va or the space that defines and relates humans to their ancestors, to the land, to the waters and to the Atua is tapu or sacred. The sacred relationship between people, the ancestors, the lands, the waters and their God(s) is central to the self and its wellbeing. Wellbeing is a spiritual state:

*'Wellbeing is about spiritually and physically being well' (FFG4)*

*'most important area of wellbeing is spiritual' (FFG6).*

### **Wellbeing is Rooted in Reciprocity and Mutuality**

The self in relationship exists in reciprocal and mutual arrangements. The self is expected in these arrangements to contribute materially, physically, emotionally, financially and spiritually towards others' wellbeing. In turn, at significant life events and stages of vulnerability, the self receives contributions at all these levels and therefore experiences wellbeing. Wellbeing is experienced in the give and take of reciprocity and mutuality:

*'You give, they respect your gift, they reciprocate in acknowledgment, it may differ from family to family' (FFG3).*

The self in relationship also finds wellness when members of the aiga or aiga-like formations are working together harmoniously and supporting each other, and when aiga

members aid and support each other during periods of vulnerability. The security this gives and the assurance that everyone is well through mutual support and care bring a sense of wellbeing:

*'wellbeing is defined through actions of support and actions of alofa' (FFG1).*

### **Wellbeing is the Fulfillment of Roles and Responsibilities**

As was mentioned earlier, the selves that relate in aiga or new aiga formations have assigned roles and responsibilities. The fulfillment of these roles and responsibilities is tied to entitlements and access. They include the provision of food, shelter and clothing, as well as spiritual and ceremonial supports, and their fulfillment brings a sense of self-worth and wellbeing:

*'when we have the ability to make a sao and fulfill our responsibilities ... we are well' (FFG1).*

The pride of providing for families and family members brings confidence in one's ability and skills to provide, which is rooted in the subsistence economy of abundance, availability and accessibility. Heroic stories of provision are stories of highly developed skills in fishing and in snaring birdlife. Pacific peoples are proud providers for their families, villages and communities:

*'wellbeing is employment, achieving materially, having financial security, having savings, learning how to manage money and having money for faalavelave' (FFG7).*

Housing is not only a physical space that creates a sense of belonging; it is also a spiritual place where people gather and find 'home'. It is a place where families and the selves that relate first learn boundaries or the shape of the spaces that define relationship. It is also space for nurturance and learning. In the Pacific, one's home or house is another core element of identity:

*'For parents, wellbeing includes a roof over the children's heads' (FFG9, FFG8 and FFG7).*

Roles and responsibilities of aiga were able to be fulfilled with the produce from subsistence economies in Pacific nations. The material supports and contributions from the land and the waters were abundant, available and accessible, and people were able to provide for their families. In the New Zealand setting, wellbeing is also closely connected to employment. This is like a parallel to and mirror of the abundance provided by Pacific subsistence economies :

*'wellbeing is being in paid employment in activities that contribute to families, villages and nations' (FFG1)*

*'Wellbeing is having a job ... and you are providing for yourself ... keeping in contact with your family ... and telling them what kind of job you are doing' (FFG8).*

### **Wellbeing is Having a Place in the Community**

The self that relates finds wellness in collective groups and communities. It also finds wellness in being accepted and acknowledged, having a place, or in taking part in and contributing to collectives or community. This is embedded in the notion of the self as it belongs to families, villages, provinces or confederacies, and in the New Zealand context, to new aiga formations like churches and communities.

Security is experienced when one is connected to and has a place in community. Further, one enjoys a sense of wellbeing when one has a place in the community, and contributes towards the community's wellbeing:

*'you have the good relationship with your parents and you've done family gatherings, funerals, 21sts and you've got that base, now it is to get financially secure ... ' (FFG7)*

*'helping others and that this therefore develops the wellbeing of society' (FFG3)*

*'what we give and how we communicate within the giving is what matters in the achievement of community wellbeing' (FFG2).*

For women who are homemakers, wellbeing is knowing that their contributions and their role as homemakers are honoured and acknowledged, that these roles bring them respect, and that the care they provide for families and communities is valued and acknowledged:

*'it would be strengthening for women to have their contributions acknowledged' (FFG14).*

Wellbeing is experienced by the elder generation when they are not isolated and feeling powerless about their abilities to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. Collectives or groups become safe places for elders to speak their own languages, discuss sensitive issues, and get support or access to help. Wellbeing is experienced by elders when they are in collectives doing things together:

*'I look at the elders in my family and in the past they always do things together – it seems to give them a sense of happiness, of wellbeing together, whether it was Mamas in the [paipai] or Papas digging the umu together ... doing the food and even the church ... felt like everyone worked together' (FFG16).*

Wellbeing for the elders also involves the transmission of their cultures, languages and heritage to their grandchildren and their ability to assist their grandchildren to reach their goals. Wellbeing for elders also means that they are able to pass on to their grandchildren their wisdom and learning about life. They see these as their contributions to their grandchildren and through them to the future generations:

*'passing on language, and culture and our way of life to our grandchildren' (FFG1).*

### **Wellbeing is a Good Education**

In New Zealand, wellbeing is also connected to having a good education that provides life skills and secures future employment. Education and qualifications bring honour and status to families and family members. Education and qualifications also secure higher levels of remuneration that give support to aiga and aiga-like formations. The Fijian elders described this as:

*'Improving one's life to benefit family and next generation' (FFG5).*

Pacific peoples migrated to New Zealand partly to secure good education for their children so they could fulfill roles and responsibilities and ensure that their heritages are protected and developed. Education is therefore a key to Pacific wellbeing:

*'It has a lot to do with education' (FFG2)*

*'When our children do well in school, then we have wellbeing' (FFG1).*

### **Wellbeing is Living Safely**

Selves in relationships find security when the boundaries that define them are kept, and daily living is free from physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual and cultural violations:

*'knowing who you are gives you confidence and security in knowing your boundaries and how you relate ...'* (FFG7)

*'Wellbeing is living safely ... being stable'* (FFG13).

### **Pacific Values Underpinning Reciprocal Relationships and Contributions**

The over-arching concept of wellbeing takes us yet further inside the concepts of cultural obligation and volunteering, and allowed us in the focus groups discussions and interviews to attempt to enumerate the values that lie behind the contributions people make in relationship. The self in relationship to the ancestors, the land, the waters and the Atua is located in family structures that are in turn located in villages, motu and nations. These locations within relationships and family structures define roles, responsibilities, rights and entitlements that become not only one's heritage but also one's identity in the most profoundly existential way.

Pacific relational selves find self-worth and wellbeing in ensuring that relations, lands, waters and genealogies are assisted and supported and are therefore in a state of wellbeing. The values of self-worth and wellbeing are concomitant with the fact that Pacific selves in relationship live lives that are purposeful and meaningful:

*'Your life must have a purpose ... if you live, your life needs to be useful'* (FFG6).

It is thus in the fulfillment of one's heritage and responsibilities that one finds self-worth or self-respect and a reflection of connectedness, mutuality and love.

The values discussed below were identified by the Faafaletui of elders and young people. Because of the vital nature of values in relational arrangements and their role in defining the uniqueness of each Pacific nation, we have kept them in their own terms and maintained their discrete contexts. Where values are indicated in English, we have included Pacific meanings as shared in Faafaletui focus groups.

The Faafaletui focus groups identified that these values were passed down from the ancestors through many generations to the present, and expressed their hope that they would continue to be transmitted to the next generations. These values are taught in the home as well as in the community. Pacific values have taken on extra meanings as a result of the influence of Christianity and capitalism, which is an indication of their adaptability and flexibility; and new values are constantly presenting themselves for consideration as well. At the same time a cultural and spiritual core is unassailably identifiable.

### **The Value of Guardianship**

One of the core responsibilities for Pacific peoples is the responsibility to 'guard' the special relationships in which the self is located. These special or primary relationships include the relationships to the ancestors, to the land and waters, and to the Atua:

*'... as a Cook Islander we have to protect land ownership. ... I had to go to court to protect the succession of my nephew and my niece and I did that voluntarily for them because they couldn't do it ... I promised my brother when he was sick that I would try and help his children so I went back and put them on our land'* (FFG13).

Pacific familial, social, political and economic structures are elaborate and therefore have etiquettes and protocols that guide speech, behaviour and ways of relating. They also guide how people assist each other and how wealth is produced and distributed. These protocols are passed on from generation to generation and, as one young people's Faafaletui focus group pointed out,

*'O le tu ma le savali' (FFG7)*

*'villages have their own protocols and etiquettes' (FFG10).*

Sometimes, roles and responsibilities are intergenerational and are fulfilled by present generations in order that the culture and heritage are kept alive and present:

*'wholeness is participation in communal works ...' (FFG6)*

*'Positive identity is denoted by working for the common good' (FFG6).*

In New Zealand, role modelling by older siblings for younger ones is taken seriously and performed with pride. It is one of the primary ways in which Pacific cultures are transmitted, and thus acts as a guardian of culture and heritage:

*'seeing older ones fulfill their roles teaches me a lot about fa'asamoa' (FFG7)*

*'older siblings become role models' (FFG7).*

### **The Value of Alofa**

The Faafaletui focus groups identified that alofa, aroa, 'ofa, loloma, fakalofa and alowha are the main values that underpin and imbue Pacific selves, structures, protocols and etiquettes of contribution and relational arrangements:

*'you love your family, you love your people and you give because you love' (FFG2)*

*'love breeds love' (FFG3)*

*'Fakalofa – to give with love and freely' (FFG4)*

*'Lomoma – which is giving, sharing and helping those in need'*

*'Alowha – giving selflessly' (FFG6).*

Alowha is at the basis of the Tokelauan cherished metaphor, Aloloha tama manu, which means to take care of the unfortunate. It is this value that informs community projects and works for the common good with a view to protecting the vulnerable:

*'Aloloha tama manu' (FFG6).*

It is 'ofa which is at the centre of the Tongan metaphor, pikipiki hama vaevae manava, the meaning of which includes sharing life and belonging.

The concept of alofa is premised on face-to-face relationships or being in the presence of the other. This may not mean being in the physical presence of the other but rather that one is always present in the thoughts and the heart of the other. It was alofa that the Samoan Faafaletui focus group identified as the spring from which actions of help and assistance flow:

*'alofa is not only being present physically ... but it is to be present in thought and to be remembered' (FFG1).*

### **The Values of Belonging, Participation and Inclusion**

The self that is born into families, genealogies, motu, enua, provinces, groups and clans is grounded and finds security in relationships and draws its identity from the lands, the waters and the peoples to whom it belongs. The self is embedded in the security of belonging. Thus the Faafaletui focus groups pointed out that Pacific people's sensibility and sensitivities to the issues and value of belonging commit them to establishing physical places and policies and institutional spaces of belonging:

*'Belonging to the same province, belonging to the same confederacy makes contributions a bit easier ...' (FFG5).*

The relational self who belongs also participates in reciprocal and mutual relational arrangements. The relational self assists, helps and supports those who are vulnerable, and through participation with families and communities creates circles of support and wellbeing. Everyone's participation is vital and necessary for the welfare of the collective. As one Faafaletui focus group pointed out:

*'we are connected to each other and what befalls one ... befalls the other' (FFG1).*

Pacific relational selves who are centred on belonging and who participate through service presume inclusion. Inclusion is an important value in Pacific families, communities, motu and nations. Inclusion is valued because it reinforces belonging and gives importance to there being a place and space for each role and for each person.



### **The Value of Tautua or Service**

The relational self that belongs and participates also serves. Service or tautua was described by elders' and young people's Faafaletui focus groups as being highly valued in Pacific cultures.

In some Pacific nations, every one in the family, village, motu, province and national structure serves and is in turn served. The concept and enactment of service amongst all these roles presupposes interconnection and relationship, which give meaning and bind aiga, magafaoa, kainga, group, clan, family, village, motu, province and national structure together:

*'Service is important and one is elected through the service one has given' (FFG4)*

*'being Samoan is to tautua-serving elders and being with family and being trained by elders about tautua' (FFG7)*

*'You are always there to serve, you always serve your elders and that's what ... makes us unique because we are always serving, it's a two-way street, and it comes back to you' (FFG 7M)*

*'Chiefly status and the status of normal people are unique but they relate and both these roles are linked to each other' (FFG5).*

It is said that one's pathway to leadership or position of authority is through serving families, relationships, communities and nations. The value of service connects roles, responsibilities and differing statuses. Children, young people, parents, leaders, matai, ministers, royalty and kings all serve, and through their service they find self-worth, self-respect and wholeness:

*'You start from the kitchen to the front; you don't start from the front to the kitchen' (FFG4)*

*'Chiefly status and the status of normal people are unique but they relate and both these roles are linked to each other' (FFG5).*

The young people's Faafaletui focus groups were clear that they were seeking assistance and guidance from the elders on the depth of the meaning and practice of tautua:

*'... being Samoan is to tautua, to serve elders; and being with family and being trained by elders about tautua' (FFG7).*

Like alofa, the notion of tautua is therefore fundamental to many of the other values that emerged in discussion.

### **The Values of Contribution and Giving**

A Pacific relational self in reciprocal and mutual arrangements contributes and gives. In turn, the self is contributed and given to. Contributions and giving are underpinned by the values and concepts of belonging, participation and inclusion. Pacific peoples participate and contribute because they belong and are included. These contributions are acknowledged and in turn are reciprocated:

*'These contributions are made out of love and out of a sense of responsibility' (FFG5)*

*'We contribute out of love shown to us by past generations' (FFG5)*

*'My contribution is I will talk and find some solutions in order to help them with their problems ... this is my contribution towards family and friends' (FFG16).*

### **The Value of Partnership and Equivalence**

Being partner to or in partnership with is an important value of a Pacific relational self. Soa, meaning partner or to partner, is the base word of fesoasoani, meaning to assist, support or help. It is also the base word of tausoa, meaning to help, to assist or to partner in carrying an avega, kavega or burden/ load:

*'Fesoasoani is to assist, support and help' (FFG1)*

*'tau soa le avega' (FFG1).*

Soa or to partner is also the base word for fa'asoa, which means to share or distribute in order that an equivalence is achieved. Such a process of distribution and redistribution honours partnerships and relationships:

*'fa'asoa – to share as in partnership or to distribute in order that there is an equivalence' (FFG1)*

*'Te inati distribute according to the numbers in each household or the families in order that everyone has adequate provision' (FFG6).*

### **The Values of Responsibility and Entitlement**

A Pacific relational self, because of its connections, inherits responsibilities and entitlements. Responsibilities and contributions are the basis of entitlements and these three concepts cannot be separated from each other. Thus responsibilities and entitlements are values on which reciprocal arrangements are premised, and are values that are being passed on to some Pacific young people:

*'Our children are being brought up with strong beliefs to help and to contribute and to become responsible and worthwhile members of society' (FFG4).*

### **The Value of Humility**

The self that is located in relationships is oriented towards selflessness so that the collective or the relationships become the focus. It is not that the self is subsumed but that it is not individualised or focused upon. Humility, in this sense then, is not the denial of the self; rather, humility is focusing on relationships and the selves in these connections. Humility is a value of a Pacific relational self:

*'Modesty, being obliging and being responsible' (FFG3)*

*'You put others first and they in turn put you first' (FFG1).*

### **The Values of Respect and Honour**

A Pacific self in relationship respects or honours God/Atua, ancestors, family names, elders, parents and other people. Respect and honour in this sense mean bringing the relational self into juxtaposition with all those entities and people with whom one has a connection, caring for them and paying tribute to them. These values are structured through Pacific etiquettes and protocols that set out proper behaviours of acknowledgement and care, as both elders' and young people's Faafaletui focus groups noted:

*'Fa'aalo'alo' (FFG1)*

*'But the pride is internal and the thanks are often spoken not in words but you know you have been treated with respect' (FFG6)*

*'I saw my parents struggle ... they did a lot for us, especially me, and I wanted to give something in return ... that's respect' (FFG18)*

*'It's about being honoured ... it's about being respected' (FFG11).*

### **The Values of Gratitude, Grace and Acknowledgement**

Pacific relational selves throughout their lives and especially at their times of vulnerability receive from the grace and generosity of God/Atua, the lands, seas and peoples to whom they are connected. Through these experiences of grace, Pacific peoples respond with acknowledgment and gratitude. Protocols and etiquettes of relational arrangements are therefore embedded in grace, gratitude and acknowledgment, and provide ways for the expression of these values:

*'Hearing the stories from our parents not having much and struggling to get us to where we are ... it makes me grateful for what we have now' (FFG12).*

People's contributions and relationships are acknowledged, be it at the domestic level or in the public domains; contributions at significant life events are sometimes informed or motivated by the need to acknowledge past and present relationships.

### **The Value of the Sacred and Spirituality**

The sacred is linked to spirituality. In this sense, spirituality is embedded in the four primary relationships: the self to God/Atua, the self to ancestors and heritage, the self to the waters and lands, and the self to other human beings in a context of justice and love.

The two values of sacredness and spirituality imbue the cultures, etiquette and protocols of relationships:

*'Fundamental relationships are those relationships of me with my family or other people, and myself and my surrounding or environment and the third is myself with my spirituality. They are called meaakalo. These three have to live in harmony' (FFG14).*

### **The Values of Hospitality, Generosity and Giving the Best**

Pacific selves located in aiga, matakeinanga, kainga, magafaoa, matavuvale, group and clan, value hospitality and generosity. Hospitality here means the creation of space or place for the existence of those with whom the self is in relationship. Generosity in one sense is alofa, aroa, 'ofa, loloma and fakalofa. In another it is giving or producing the best. These two values infuse reciprocal and mutual relationships and protect against the mechanising of giving and receiving:

*'Helping, respecting, producing your best on Sundays' (FFG5)*

*'At funerals we take our best crafts, these gifts are not prescribed and not enforced' (FFG3).*

### **The Values of Peace and Harmony**

Peace and harmony are both the goals and the bedrock on which relational selves are premised. It is said that at times of conflict one of the peace-making approaches between conflicting parties is to ensure long-term relationships through unions and marriages. Further,

the relational self finds wholeness in being at peace and harmony in all relationships. In addition, wholeness is experienced when all the elements of the relational self are in harmony:

*'peace, love and harmony' (FFG5 and FFG3).*

### **The Value of Success**

Pacific values of giving the best and being the best for your family, aiga, kainga, motu, group, clan, province and nation extend to being a success in the New Zealand context. The value of success is not only relational but has become individualised. The goal of both is to do well for families, communities and nations, for example:

*'Passionate about going the extra mile in order to succeed' (FFG7).*

### **Meaning**

The exploration of meaning is a little like an archaeological dig. There are layers upon layers, and each must be identified and lifted before the next one can be revealed. Within each layer there are also tiny nuggets and particles that need to be sifted out – they may be a word, like *tautua*, or an image, like *fa'asoa*. Carefully brushing aside layers of sand only serves to show how all the grains are connected and run into each other, how time is not linear but cyclical, how people do not live in isolation but in relationship, how identity and relationship inform, reinforce and make meaning.

This is the interior, fundamental and core aspect of the phenomena we are calling cultural obligation and volunteering, the *how* and the *why*. We also need to examine its expression, the *what*, *which* and *who*. The *when* is an artificial construct – it is now, and then, and will be: it is infinite, and cyclic.

## **The Expression of Cultural Obligations and Volunteering**

### **Contributions and What They Are**

In order to ascertain the *expression* of cultural obligation and volunteering, it is helpful to look first at the actual nature of the contributions made in reciprocal and mutual relationships. This will enable us to describe the types and forms of behaviour that are being referred to, as well as their nature, character and quality.

In the New Zealand context, traditional ways of relating and being part of have inevitably been challenged and changed. In many cases, the changes are adaptive and innovative, transferring many of the traditional values of cultural obligation and volunteering to a new setting.

By looking at the process of change, and examining what people in the focus groups said about cultural obligation and volunteering in this new context, it may be possible to see more clearly what the quintessential truths of reciprocity and mutuality are, since these will either emerge unscathed or be more easily identifiable as they are subjected to the currents of change. Certain values are immutable while others are more flexible: the discussions and interviews help to distill meaning.

### **Relational Selves in Traditional Settings**

Pacific practices of making contributions has been handed down through many generations to the present. Knowledge of the forms, etiquette and protocols of contribution is taught within families, groups and motu, and through example and participation. While the forms of contribution may change, the messages of alofa, 'ofa, aroa and love from past generations that are embodied in this behaviour encourage the present generations to continue:

*'we contribute out of love shown to us by past generations' (FFG5)*

*'I practice fulfillment of my responsibilities to church and family ... guided by witnessing my father – migration has not taken that memory away' (FFG3).*

The concepts of responsibility and commitment are enacted through the contributions that people make to those with whom they are in relationship. Responsibilities and commitments are clearly set out in the etiquette and protocols of family structures and roles. These responsibilities can be fulfilled when people have the skills and ability to perform them and access to the resources that can ensure that the responsibilities are carried out:

*'When we have the ability to make a sao (contribution) and being creative in order to contribute to communities, villages and nations, we find wholeness' (FFG1)*

*'...this denotes individual, family and motu financial skills and technological offerings to the project' (FFG6).*

The Faafaletui focus groups pointed out that the maintenance of Pacific people's cultures and practices of contribution is dependent on everyone's contribution to living out these values and passing them on to the next generation:

*'we hope to maintain the life of service and sharing in love ... the practice and maintenance of these depend entirely on all of us as a contribution' (FFG3)*

*'what we have is what connects us' (FFG7).*

Both elders' and young people's Faafaletui focus groups were clear that the selves that are located in relationships are committed to ensuring that those to whom they are related are well and are cared for on all the five terrains of life, that is, on the emotional, spiritual, physical, mental and, in New Zealand, the cultural levels. These selves, as has been pointed out earlier, are located in family structures that assign roles and responsibilities and ensure that there is a commitment to contribute towards each other along established pathways and practices that are clearly set out in etiquette and protocols. Contributions and responsibilities are determined by the location of each self within various social structures. For example,

*'the status of a family determines contributions' (FFG2)*

*'status within the family, village, island, province and confederacy determines our contributions' (FFG5)*

*'youngest brother contributes a lot' (FFG3).*

Contributions serve as reminders to those within the receiving party of the giving party's social, cultural and material capability. They are in the end a way of honouring and enlivening the relationship and the need to have that supported and remembered and/or restored:

*'You give the best you have ...' (FFG4)*

*'At a funeral we can mourn ... and it is where we can renew our relationships' (FFG4).*

The forms and character of contributions and the ways they are enacted depend on the nature of the relationship or the nature of the significant life event. These contributions may be made in elaborate public enactments and rituals or they may be carried out in churches or village ceremonies. Contributions can also be made at the domestic level and at the intra-familial level, for example, caring for elders or each other's children:

*'We also contribute in ways ... looking after our elders, looking after our families, children .... we have all this because we have our strong family links, our strong traditional links' (FFG5).*

Contributions during significant life events are made to assist and fulfill the implementation of rituals and ceremonies. They are also made to acknowledge relationships that exist between people: the presence of one to the other, in relationship, brings comfort and the secure knowledge that the aiga/family is there and that one is not alone and isolated. This is a key contribution:

*'you being there is more important than 'what you bring' is how Fijians [see it]. It's being present; it's being there for each other ... what matters is your presence' (FFG5).*

In addition, contributions send messages of reciprocity and mutuality from the giver's party to the receiving party. These messages of reciprocity and mutuality remind the receiving party that their earlier contributions and alofa towards the givers have not been forgotten.

It is important to note that contributions and acts of alofa include more than simple material and financial help: contributions can also take the form of spiritual and emotional assistance and guidance. The following show some of the range of contributions that Faafaletui focus group members identified:

*'People who make contributions in either financial ways or in giving their time do so because of their love ... and they have built that relationship to be able to make that contribution' (FFG5)*

*'at weddings we exchange gifts from bride's family to the groom's family' (FFG2)*

*'at engagement parties we contribute food' (FFG2)*

*'at hair cutting ceremonies we take food' (FFG2)*

*'At funerals we take our best crafts, our tapa and our mats' (FFG3 and FFG5).*

When someone does nothing for other selves in a state of vulnerability, then they also perpetuate their own vulnerability. The elders' Faafaletui focus group stated that in times of vulnerability:

*'We give time, money and food and we give it because of our love' (FFG2)*

*'it is important to contribute ... towards the future and having a place for Tongan people who are in hardship' (FFG3)*

*'now we give time' (FFG5)*

*'we give time, time heals, time grows, time settles' (FFG3)*

Relational selves cannot experience wholeness and security if members of the aiga are vulnerable and are not experiencing wellbeing:

*'Look after parents ... and send money home to parents' (FFG2)*

*'contributions include taking in young people in order that they are educated' (FFG3)*

*'Looking after families ... each other ... we contribute money, time, advice, our presence, and our crafts like tapa and mats' (FFG5)*

*'home visits, visiting the sick, taking communion to the sick ... and to home-based people' (FFG2)*

*'If we have a family member who needs help we would help emotionally if someone is feeling down ... family members go and lift up their spirits' (FFG17)*

One of the key natural ways of supporting and assisting each other is through acts of hospitality or alofa, which is about the creation of space for the existence of the others with whom the self is in relationship:

*'O le tofi po'o le tofiga... ' (FFG1)  
(*'It is our responsibility ... to create space'*).*

Hospitality is also a value and a metaphor that informs and imbues Pacific structures and cultures:

*'Providing hospitality for those visiting from our nations' (FFG8)*

*'supporting people as though they are family' (FFG8)*

*'Each island has its own network and provides support to its own members, even though they might not have met before' (FFG8).*

Both elders' and young people's Faafaletui focus groups pointed to the precious and highly valued contributions of ancestors, past generations and present elders. They also acknowledged throughout the Faafaletui focus groups the precious contributions of children and young people:

*'Doing the fekau (tasks) in our homes' (FFG12)*

*'Looking after my siblings while my parents are at work' (FFG13)*

*'Being a role model for my younger family members' (FFG7)*

*'Being the older son I had to sit there and receive my extended families' reciprocal gifts ... I didn't know much' (FFG16)*

*'we learnt young how to cook and to care for our brothers and sisters' (FFG7)*

*'at 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays, weddings and family gatherings, we contribute financially or with food. ... we provide hospitality and contribute' (FFG8)*

It was agreed in discussion that the greatest contribution young Pacific people make is when they identify themselves with pride with their cultural groups and show their parents, elders and community that they have absorbed the skills, actions and values of their cultures and their gendered roles:

*'the greatest contribution I can make personally is to say I am Cook Island' (FFG8 )*

*'when the Minister came, my cousins didn't know what to do ... I showed them how to serve and make the ipu ti (serve tea)' (FFG7 )*

*'when we go to help, I know I go straight to the back to peel taro ... and my sister goes to the front to do the ie toga (to attend to the receiving and giving of fine mats and gifts)' (FFG7).*

In the performance of acts of contribution, care, support and love, the relational self and the values of wellbeing and safety are not only expressed and upheld but are also consolidated and maintained within the cycle of relatedness that creates emotional, spiritual, physical, mental and, in New Zealand, cultural health.

The self in relationship is not only accorded responsibilities and commitments; it is also assigned entitlements and access to land, fisheries and a social network of support through these relationships. These entitlements are nourished through contributions and responsibilities that support these relationships, and are kept alive and dynamic, remembered and made secure, through the activity of relating and the ongoing relationship and network of contribution:

*'We attend funerals and at our families' funerals they return the favour' (FFG8).*

The acts of contributing and reciprocity ensure that people are cared for and are secure. The circle or cycles of reciprocity and mutuality are embodied and expressed in acts of contribution and support. The concept of contribution that is embedded in reciprocity and mutuality has as its related concepts alofa, entitlement and privilege. These concepts are in turn not considered by themselves; rather, they are considered together because they are linked and one sustains the other. For example, an act of alofa creates and sustains alofa, and entitlement to and privilege in having access to collective family land is strengthened by participation in and contribution to the family:

*'You 'bank' support and alofa with other people and they will support you in times of need' (FFG1).*

*'I witnessed the positive outcomes from my contribution and therefore I am never tired of doing good' (FFG3).*

*'Our faia means our relationships that define our aia (rights) and our responsibilities' (FFG1)*

*'If we don't engage in osi aiga, we are perceived as being external to aiga' (FFG1).*

The contributions are therefore visible signs of connectedness, of belonging and of wellbeing. They are not discrete objects that have a market value, any more than the self is a discrete being that has an individual veracity.

### **Relational Selves in New Sites of Belonging**

New aiga-like formations for Pacific peoples in New Zealand occur in churches, workplaces, sports clubs, flatting or living situations, and sometimes in neighbourhoods. Pacific peoples take into these new aiga formations their understandings of their roles, responsibilities, rights and entitlements as well as their values and the ethics of aiga. Reciprocal acts include supporting people emotionally, spiritually, physically, mentally and, in New Zealand, culturally:

*'To help each other and assist each other out at times of faalavelave (important family event) or at times when there is a death in the family or a faaipoipoga (wedding), we are taught alofa – that is what drives us to assist each other out' (FFG1).*

Aiga and new aiga formations are structures that support and are in turn supported by their members or the selves that exist in relationship to them. They therefore ensure that there



is a circularity of support for their members and they become a bedrock on which members can rely:

*'We are so close as Pacific people. What belongs to me belongs to my neighbours. If any faalavelave happens to my neighbours, we are there to support. Even though we are from different islands I think they are my family' (FFG13).*

Such support ensures that family members are secure to give and that in turn they will be supported. This confidence in the aiga or aiga-like formation (and being there at times of vulnerability) engenders trust, which means not only having faith but also having confidence that the aiga or aiga-like formations have the skills and competencies to support all life events:

*'If I am weak physically and spiritually, there are ways that our community has helped me, encouraged me with their prayers... they stood by me when my son was sick in the hospital. Physically I needed help and support and they came ... people need our love and support "inside" as well as "outside"' (FFG13).*

Cultural obligations or the responsibilities of the relational self include creating places and spaces of belonging. Because of recent Pacific migration to New Zealand, Pacific people's usual responsibilities for care and support of families and extended families have been extended to include the creation of places of belonging in New Zealand:

*'Our ... building projects were driven primarily by the observations of kin-based relationships and the need to have our own places ...' (FFG2).*

This drive encouraged the building of churches and other church buildings, as well as community facilities, and many such places were built in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s with little or no assistance from external funding bodies. Instead, they were paid for by income drawn from people holding up to three jobs per worker. The purchase and construction of these buildings and lands were negotiated by a population most of whom had been in New Zealand for less than 15 years:

*'These facilities were funded through people's incomes and extra community fundraising socials and fruit picking' (FFG6).*

Pacific churches in Aotearoa New Zealand, both mainstream and those brought from Pacific nations, have become places of belonging and gathering and core institutions of inclusion for Pacific peoples in Aotearoa:

*'I love my culture and we were brought up in the church and so if there was anything needed to be done at the church we would do anything for the church' (FFG15).*

During the early period of migration, churches and families were the two institutions that provided housing, employment networks, knowledge and skills for those settling into Aotearoa New Zealand. In Newtown, the Reverend Pepe Nokise and his family used to provide accommodation and shelter for early Pacific migrants. Other early Pacific church ministers did the same:

*'In New Zealand we organised our own housing, built our own churches, set up our own communities ...' (FFG1p)*

*'the self is also identified by church groups and denominations' (FFG3)*

*'... our valuing of our churches' (FFG4).*

It was also in the churches that Pacific peoples spoke their own languages and were surrounded by an expression of spirituality that was familiar. They also created in the churches aiga-like formations that supported them and in turn were supported by them. As a gatherer and comforter of Pacific peoples, the churches have come to be regarded as a home away from home and therefore another place of belonging. These practices and formations were Pacific people's 'familiar' in a new and different context:

*'Christmas and New Years services where there is singing and dancing and dancing troupes entertain people in their homes ...' (FFG2).*

In recent years, the churches have also become 'incubators' for the teaching of Pacific cultures and languages, for example, Aoga Amata:

*'We have Kunana Early Childhood, a lot of the work done there is voluntary ... It was started by a lot of mothers who are not in the workforce' (FFG15).*

There are two main motivators for the creation of safe places not only for the immediate generations but also for the generations to come. The first has been the creation of safe spaces where hospitality can be offered to visiting groups and families; the second has been the provision of places where Pacific peoples can speak the languages of their ancestors and ensure the transmission of those languages to young people, especially those born in New Zealand:

*'Family visiting and having ... somewhere where everyone can get together like a centre or meeting houses, falepa, fale fono for the future generation where kids/ fanau a Tokelau teach [culture], gossip and fellowship' (FFG12).*

In relational and cyclic time, ancestors are not forgotten; rather, they and their contributions are present. It is the responsibility and obligation of the present generations to protect, safeguard, enhance and pass on to the future generations the cultural, linguistic, land- and sea-based heritage that they carry with them. This will ensure that these treasures of heritage will survive into the future:

*'It is our responsibility to pass on our cultures and languages and our ways of seeing the world' (FFG6).*

Further, cultural obligations or the commitments of the relational self have found expression in creating places and spaces of participation and belonging for Pacific peoples within schools and their affiliated bodies, sporting organisations, local and central government, government policies, in the arts and music, and in the fashion industry. As one Cook Island elder shared in one of the Faafaletui focus groups, she brings a Pacific presence and through her contribution creates a Pacific place of participation within the arts classes run by the local city council:

*'all I ask is that the knowledge of Cook Island embroidery I give ... is passed on to anyone who asks to be taught, that's my reward ... so our knowledge is not lost' (FFG15).*

Keeping integrity with ancestors and with future generations has motivated Pacific peoples to carry out projects or activities that are enactments of cultural obligations, responsibilities or contributions of the relational self. These include the setting up of language

nests as well as the creation of spaces at tertiary, secondary and primary school levels for the teaching and transmission of Pacific languages and cultures:

*'we've got a Punanga Reo Early Childhood, a lot of the work done there is voluntary. The mothers go in to help out because we don't have enough teachers so a lot of our mothers go and help out' (FFG14).*

Early Pacific teachers not only gathered together Pacific students, they also organised themselves into a network of advocacy and support. They created educational teaching materials as well as developed ways to teach the cultures and languages of Pacific peoples:

*'we put together trainings in weaving, carving, hiva and education revision groups ...' (FFG6).*

The energy, skills and knowledge that ensured that these spaces were created, as well as training a workforce to teach Pacific languages and cultures, came from Pacific peoples themselves. Like the building of churches, these developments were achieved with little financial and/or resource contributions from external sources:

*'it's having integrity to ancestors, our cultures, ourselves and our children ... and having pride in our achievements' (FFG5 and FFG6).*

In addition, new aiga-like formations such as sports clubs have been created:

*'I teach sports to the younger generation and sometimes I use my Samoan language in that, their eyes light up' (FFG7)*

*'helping with groups in church that I belong to like youth groups and feeling blessed because of it' (FFG9).*

The drive to open space within regional councils, government structures and government policies for Pacific peoples ensured that the present and future generations could belong, participate, be acknowledged and be resourced. Further, this drive enabled Pacific peoples to be included and contribute rather than just being passive observers and consumers of others' contributions:

*'We have pride in our achievements and in our ability to contribute ... contributions make us whole' (FFG6).*

In New Zealand, one of the main contributions that Pacific peoples offer each other is in the area of advocating on behalf of families, group, motu or nations with government departments:

*'Advocating on behalf of our elders to various government departments' (FFG2)*

*'Assisting them at the lawyers and attending meetings on behalf of the community' (FFG2).*

Pacific peoples, through their cultural obligations and responsibilities to each other, have extended their existing knowledge and practice base in order that Pacific peoples, their cultures, knowledge and practices are upheld and passed on:

*'We shared our cultural practices ... and our Tokelauan tournaments' (FFG6).*

Cultural obligations or responsibilities of the relational self have also enlarged multicultural and multidisciplinary networks of support, ensuring the improvement of Pacific people's living conditions both in New Zealand and in the Pacific. These multicultural and multidisciplinary networks of support extend to many countries within the region and in other

parts of the world, providing Pacific peoples with increased access to social and economic opportunities:

*'Our practices of supporting and assisting and our duties towards each other strengthen our networks' (FFG5).*

In addition to actions and undertakings, cultural obligations or commitments of the relational self also include becoming role models for present and future generations:

*'The positive thing that happens when we help – the family name is honoured like if your parents go and do the stuff and they see you helping and they say, "This is her daughter, ... she does this, this and this in the community – she's going to be just like her mother", so you gain respect from other people' (FFG12).*

Through these new expressions of cultural obligation and commitment, Pacific peoples have gained a sense of confidence and self-worth. In fulfilling their cultural obligations and/or responsibilities, they have learnt new, exciting skills and knowledge, extended their networks of support, and experienced what it is to achieve and endure:

*'everyone participates and there is a sense of achievement and pride in completing projects for the common good' (FFG6).*

The achievements of the elder generation are enormous – the generation that bought the family home; built the community facilities; supported their families in Pacific nations of origin; raised Pacific All Blacks, Silver Ferns and Black Caps as well as opera singers, poets, writers, comedians, actors, musicians and film makers; nurtured Fulbright, Churchill and Rhodes scholars; educated surgeons, doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists, economists, dentists, nurses, professors, principals, lecturers, teachers, social policy analysts, researchers, therapists, community and youth workers, social workers, probation officers, Corrections Officers, Police Officers and office workers, judges of the court, scientists and factory workers, cleaners and hospitality industry workers, and taxi drivers and bus drivers; and encouraged and supported entrepreneurs, ministers, priests and women religious, chefs, waiters and wine producers. They achieved all of this, cared for another generation and put them through education, all the while moving forward into the next socio-economic classes.

The multitude of achievements of this elder generation is still to be fully appreciated, fully recognised and fully acknowledged by their children, their Pacific countries of origin, and by New Zealand and its peoples.

## **Contributions and Social Change: What They Have Become**

### **Gifts of the Past and the Present**

The main strengths that the past has gifted Pacific peoples are the concepts of the relational self, reciprocal and mutual arrangements, gender arrangements, relational and cyclic time, allusive and metaphorical language, and a subsistence economy of abundance, availability and accessibility:

*'we had a common language, common values and common structures with which to support each other ... now we don't' (FFG5).*

The subsistence economy of abundance provided the spirit of generosity and care from which commitments and responsibilities drew. These also provided the security that wells up

from a deep sense of belonging and the will to participate because one is included, valued and acknowledged:

*'At home we were clear about our cultural responsibilities, our sharing and our giving ... we had produce to give' (FFG5)*

*'Back in the island we are so used to picking the fruit from the tree and cooking our own kinds of foods ... our bodies were accustomed to eating the fish and foods straight from our plantations or our tree. But then you come here to New Zealand and it is very difficult for us to continue that practice ... that lifestyle here in New Zealand because there's none of that here for us' (FFG2).*

The past also contained a coherence of values, language, structure, rituals and symbols of giving, within a social structure that assigned roles and maintained the values of belonging and participation. Each person had a contribution to make and these were role- and age-appropriate. Everyone participated within a society with clear leadership and holistic values:

*'Elders led and were clear about the directions and people were willing to follow' (FFG6).*

The clarity of roles made collective efforts and achievements easier. Through these, people met each others' needs, created spaces for this generation and the next generations, transferred leadership roles and skills to younger generation, and ensured survival of culture, language, the lands and the waters.

The present gifts Pacific peoples with technological skills and advances that enable people to fly thousands of miles and be with aiga or aiga-like formations in a matter of hours. These technological skills have also extended lives and/or in some cases improved the quality of life:

*'our contributions are financial and technological to these projects for the common good' (FFG6).*

They are able to meet and keep in contact with each other along the information highway, and relatives, especially the generations who are birthed and raised so far away from 'home', can now access pictures, music, news and stories of home through the internet and thus stay in touch:

*'rather than visiting we can now text them on our mobiles ...' (FFG12).*

Some technological advances made possible through modern economies have enabled Pacific peoples to fulfill their obligations, responsibilities and commitments towards each other in completely new and undreamt of ways. Relationships and face-to-face connection have new meanings.

### **Western Influence and Change: Challenges**

The contexts in which Pacific peoples are located are embedded in the cash economy that privileges individual achievement and acquisition. It is a struggle to maintain relationships, commitments and responsibilities in this context, which has had an adverse impact on the cultural, spiritual, emotional, psychological, physical and relational elements of Pacific selves:

*'The present context benefits people with money, good jobs, and the materially rich ... but it weakens our family links and responsibilities' (FFG6).*

The monocultural nature of the self, free will and choice with its legal, economic and political structures and instruments tends to marginalise the relational self and its commitments. In addition, the relational self despite the magnitude of its contributions does not find security or a place of belonging and therefore participation within the social, political and economic structures and policies of New Zealand:

*'We are in paid employment but we are unable to assist – we live in individualised and nuclearised in New Zealand' (FFG1).*

In New Zealand, Pacific cultures exist within the wider social and cultural milieu in which the palagi culture establishes and regulates norms through education and other institutions. The experience of Pacific young people growing up in New Zealand in a predominantly palagi environment sometimes leaves them confused, able to be their Pacific selves only during the weekend:

*'Sunday is the only day we can be ourselves, where we can sing our own songs, do our own talking, discussions, reading the Bible, doing hymns and it's the only day that there's no interference from any palagi part of the world' (FFG18).*

For others, this duality is destructive, so that they are unable to function well in either setting, their Pacific roots being torn away from meaning and the palagi environment offering nothing to replace this meaning:

*'being New Zealand-born you get the palagi way of thinking ... I won't volunteer for the sake of volunteering. I'd have to think about what I am volunteering for ...' (FFG12).*

While most in the FFG10 agreed with the majority of the young people's Faafaletui focus groups, that giving, sharing and being responsible for people's welfare still came naturally –

*'Contributing and helping people still comes naturally – it is in our blood' (FFG11)*

others felt that some of the younger Pacific generations, both Pacific- and New Zealand-born, are influenced by the monocultural nature of New Zealand values and norms so that they differentiate themselves from their parents' values:

*'Drifting away and everyone for their own ...' (FFG11)*

*'Older generations had reasons to volunteer... our generation wants to draw the line ...' (FFG10).*

The positive impact of not having a chiefly system is that families become independent and decide things for themselves. The weakness is that there is no clear leadership and no structure of decision-making. Unity, or a sense of common purpose, is weakened and people do not network closely for support, advocacy and care:

*'Samoans' unity is about clarity of their decision-making structure ...' (FFG1)*

It was identified that Pacific people's openness to other cultures, practices, values and languages can lead to their own languages, cultures, values and practices being subordinated:

*'our open-mindedness is a weakness ... too many things crowd out our beliefs and values' (FFG11).*

In New Zealand, responsibility to care for and support aiga or new aiga-like formations is dependent on disposable incomes and employment. Material support for aiga becomes a struggle when people earn low wages or are on benefits. Responsibilities thus remain unfulfilled and wellbeing is not achieved.

In New Zealand, the provision of housing, education, food, clothing and ceremonial elements depends on disposable incomes and on available employment. Pacific peoples are often employed in the sectors where remuneration levels are lower and the variety of employment is reduced, which has negative impacts on people's pride in being providers. Appropriate, available, affordable and accessible housing is often difficult to obtain and families are pressured into overcrowding. Relationships are strained and boundaries become blurred. People's ability to provide for their families is undermined and over time wellbeing becomes depleted.

Pacific selves in New Zealand sometimes experience being excluded and marginalised despite the long years of settlement and the multitude of contributions they make to communities and to society. These exclusions result in invisibility and non-belonging for Pacific peoples:

*'It's difficult enough being a minority, it's harder still when your language, your culture and your people are not acknowledged ...' (FFG14)*

Pacific people's general sensitivity to the non-acknowledgment of their presence, relationships and contributions in New Zealand is voiced by the following quotation:

*'I had volunteered for 2 years to help out ... and when I left they did not acknowledge me ... and it hurt' (FFG10).*

The boundaries that define and facilitate relationship are distorted daily through living in a society whose norms are different.

In a Pacific context, relationships and relational arrangements are seen to be tapu, and so long as these structures and relational arrangements continue, safety, security and wellbeing are assured. It was identified in some Faafaletui focus groups that the tapu nature of these relationships is sometimes made noa or nullified either because of the dominant influence of the palagi culture or because responsibilities ascribed to certain roles within these tapu arrangements are not able to be fulfilled because of the small number of family members in New Zealand:

*'Culturally there is a discrepancy in fulfilling roles for certain relationships because of the limited nature of family members in New Zealand ... there were some cases in Auckland in which a brother was sick and no one else could look after him but his sister. Such a case shows a breaking of our social boundary veitapui because of a critical need at hand' (FFG3).*

Further, the cash economy disrupts the cycles of nature, reciprocity and mutuality, thus making Pacific peoples dependent on produce procured with disposable incomes, as was noted by both elders' and young people's Faafaletui focus groups:

*'Before we used to give taro and pigs ... now we purchase packaged foods which must be bought' (FFG2)*

*'There are changes in our practices ... we used to contribute with products from our plantations and the sea, now we have replaced them with articles purchased with money' (FFG1).*

Reciprocity and mutuality are therefore constrained by the cash economy in which the procurement of produce is dependent on the availability of cash and/or income.

The severance and distortion of reciprocity and mutuality from their connection to relational and cyclic time has meant that the natural acts of contribution and reciprocity have now been reduced to mere exchanges of goods enacted in the here and now, thus freeing the parties from any future responsibilities to contribute and to reciprocate. Further, the participants noted that the frequency and scale of ceremonies and significant life events have increased with the availability of goods and access to finance:

*'We need to take care to adapt our rituals and ceremonies in order to express love' (FFG3)*

*'Now it's financial giving and it all depends on cash and because things are available we do things in bigger proportions' (FFG9).*

The structure and ethos of reciprocal and mutual arrangements do not necessarily mean that people give in order to receive. Rather, relational selves give in order that the avega, kavenga or burden is lightened on those to whom one is related:

*'I send money home to my parents' (FFG2)*

*'we never look for return, we give wholeheartedly ...' (FFG4).*

The overall effect in a situation of cultural permeability and change is that safety gets marginalised and holistic security and the sense of wellbeing are compromised.

### **Achieving Balance**

Cultural obligation and the responsibilities of the relational self to create spaces and places of belonging in New Zealand have had both negative and positive impacts in the New Zealand setting, and it is clear that the challenge that can cause disruption can also clarify and render core traditional values, making them more flexible and revealing some of what lies at their heart.

Especially for those who came in the first wave of migration, the pressures of life in New Zealand have been challenging and even seismic. The pressure of working up to three jobs on top of raising and caring for families has meant that health care has become a lesser priority. Carrying out their responsibilities and commitments while at the same time attempting to acclimatise to cold and unfamiliar New Zealand weather also took its toll. Places of work and the nature of many of the jobs undertaken by Pacific people put them face to face sometimes with extreme temperatures, or consistently wet or hazardous conditions and materials; and sometimes they have been employed in sectors where the work is done during the coldest parts of the night.

*'Parents had to work sometimes in three jobs; they supported community activities both here and in Samoa ...' (FFG1)*

*'Like coming here in NZ, it's not really easy ...' (FFG12).*

*'In New Zealand there are changes in our foods from eating fresh produce to now eating tinned and packet food ... and this has affected our health ...' (FFG2)*

*'in New Zealand we sometimes work in cold and wet conditions ...' (FFG16).*

Further, there has been a loss of quality time with children and families. While the new places of belonging provided gathering places, it was during the building phases of these



facilities and the long hours of employment that children were deprived of parental support and guidance:

*'... that's like us with our five uncles, we just naturally have to give up our beds as you do, on the floor on the sitting room, we are all like six of us in one room and it's just the way it is' (FFG17).*

While the love of parents for their children was expressed in their commitment to provide adequate family and community 'homes', children did not always understand why their parents were working at three jobs: although the community facilities were being built for them, many children grew up feeling resentful about the long absences of their parents:

*'this was a time to reflect on the project and we counted the cost paid for by the children' (FFG6).*

At the same time, many of the young people adapted and brought their cultural values of aloha, reciprocity and mutuality into this new situation and learned to care and provide for their siblings, and to be translators and advocates for their parents with government, and commercial and employment agencies:

*'I remember when I was a student having to translate for my grandparents at the shops, and just walking them up the road for that greater sense of security for them' (FFG7).*

For them, the changes and challenges brought about a renewal of the values of reciprocity and mutuality that thrived as they took root and found expression in a new context.

## **Contributions and Who Makes Them**

### **The Cultural Self**

If cultures are healthy, they pass down their histories, memories, stories, values, etiquette and protocols, thus maintaining cultural identity and uniqueness. The self is therefore located in a distinctive language, etiquette and set of protocols:

*'Realising my culture's uniqueness in relation to other cultures and celebrating the uniqueness with which we prepare food' (FFG4)*

*'Traditions from our places of belonging set out etiquettes and protocols for what you are allowed to consume ...' (FFG5).*

However, this distinctiveness – that may appear on the surface to be akin to individualism – is seated in relationship and in the features that mark out one culture from another. Distinction is contextual and cultural, not personal and ego-based.

This paradigm can be illustrated by an analysis of names. In Western societies, names tend to be discrete and individual identifiers, but in a Pacific setting they have a very different function and effect. While they are by definition identifiers, they are also ways of denoting, remembering and passing on histories, genealogies and knowledge from one generation to the next. They are also ways of writing history or special events. Shared names link selves to each other, families to families, village to village and sometimes motu to motu. As such, names identify places and families of belonging and become motivators for collective action:

*'we know each other through the names of our families' (FFG4)*

*'they only have to say the Cook Island name and I am into it ...' (FFG2).*

It was pointed out by both elders' and young people's Faafaletui that it is critical to pass on Pacific cultures, values and practices to the younger generations:

*'we need to feed our children's minds with our practices, values and our language' (FFG4).*

It was also identified that being born into two worlds has afforded Pacific peoples the abilities and possibilities of taking the best from both and that both cultures provide unique ways by which to view and understand the world:

*'Having the best of both worlds ...' (FFG10)*

*'Now the self is influenced by both the New Zealand and Fijian cultures' (FFG11).*

Not only this, but exposure to other cultures can also enable a deep reflection and insight into the positive elements of Pacific cultures and beliefs, thus throwing light on their essence, their uniqueness and their quintessential value:

*'Overseas exposure helped me get to get a deep insight into my cultural beliefs' (FFG7).*

As well as the self being aware of and grounded in its cultural milieu, it is also fundamentally defined by gender and the assigned roles and responsibilities that are part of this definition.

### **Men and Women: Roles and Responsibilities**

An understanding of gender arrangements helps explain the familial, village, motu and Pacific nation's social and cultural arrangements to do with manhood and womanhood. These arrangements accord position and status, and define roles, responsibilities and tasks that are lifelong and intergenerational.

In the Pacific, gender-differentiated roles generally exist in households, villages, provinces, confederacies and countries, as well as in relation to unions, marriages, inter-familial relationships, child rearing and parenting:

*'men work in the plantations and women work in the home' (FFG2).*

*'Men work outside, women work inside; there are tasks and roles specific to men, likewise for women' (FFG4).*

*'Our customs for the relationship between brother and sister are different. The relationship between brother and sister is unique ... there is respect in the relationship and there are certain things that cannot be discussed' (FFG12).*

*'Structural relationships as in families, between brothers and sisters ...' (FFG3).*

This context of a subsistence economy which is abundant, available and accessible also defines gender roles in which women and men participate in cultivation, fishing and the harvesting of produce. There are cultivations that are male specific, cultivations that are female specific and cultivations in which both participate. There are the kinds of fishing that only males do, kinds that females and young people carry out, and types that both genders can participate in together, perhaps carrying out specific tasks. There is therefore a distinct gendering of production and distribution roles that flow into other social, political and familial gender arrangements:

*'Men work in the plantations' (FFG2)*

*'women collect and create crafts' (FFG3)*

*'men work outside, women work inside, it's not to identify that men are better' (FFG4).*

*'Male responsibility to fish, female responsibility to take care of the home and the elders' (FFG6).*

The patriarchal gender arrangement of Western Europe and North America is located in and controlled by vertical socio-structural relationships in which, until recently, men have dominated in decision-making and political and economic power, and women have been constrained to local and domestic spheres. The imposition of patriarchal gender arrangements (from the Greek *patria* – male, and *arche* – rule) by missionaries and colonial rule has impacted on the Pacific's own gender arrangements, sometimes distorting and replacing them.

Throughout the elders' and young people's Faafaletui, it was apparent that amongst social groupings in the churches and in some new aiga formations, there are distinct groups for women and men. This may appear to reflect women's and men's social groups in villages but, unlike patriarchal gender arrangements, the Pacific's gender arrangements have enabled both women and men to take on leadership and political decision-making roles and responsibilities:

*'Samoan women are matai' (FFG7).*

The traditional arrangements are clearly not immutable. Whereas household chores like food preparation are both male and female tasks, the nearer-to-home and lighter tasks that tended to be assigned to women and young people are beginning to be shared by men in the New Zealand setting:

*'changing roles, guys are cooking, women are in paid employment ... in two-income families, household chores are shared' (FFG11)*

*'there are now metro dads' (FFG7).*

In other words, the roles are not fixed or hierarchical. Each is essential to the other, and the fact of difference does not mean one is superior to the other. In fact, these gender roles and relationships reflect the cyclic nature of time, the mutuality of the relational self and the multidimensionality of the cultural self:

*'At fono men do talking and decision-making, now it is changing – men are realising the importance of women' (FFG4).*

## **Contributions and Data Collection**

Discussion about the Literature Review in the focus groups identified the fact that the data demonstrated that voluntary activities are narrowly defined in the present system and exclude Pacific communal and cultural activities. Nor are the multi sites of Pacific voluntary activity captured. These sites are:

- the New Zealand context;
- the aiga and aiga-like formations in the New Zealand context;
- the aiga and aiga-like formations in the Pacific context;
- the village, motu, province and confederacy in the Pacific context;

- the nations in Pacific context.

While some cultural activities are more likely to be described as manifestations of cultural obligation and volunteering in the New Zealand setting, others are prone to being overlooked as they are understood within an individualistic and market-oriented context. The cultural activities that particularly need inclusion are the transmission of values, culture, languages and knowledge to the present and the next generations. These are:

- oratory – restoring, teaching and practising forms of oratory;
- the restoration and the teaching of indigenous songs, chants and stories;
- the restoration of cultural knowledge;
- the rebuilding of places of belonging;
- other activities include exploring, restoring and documenting cultural knowledge.

These activities include the establishment of early childhood and other educational providers, inside churches and other culturally informed institutions; as well as the provision of health, social welfare and other facilitation and support services.

In addition, there are dilemmas in enumerating and measuring Pacific people's social, cultural and financial contributions to New Zealand that need first to be addressed and then to be resolved. These dilemmas include the fact that the New Zealand Census data are based around quite different notions of family and community boundaries. Voluntary activities, for example, can include unpaid work that is associated with household responsibilities, which in turn is often equated with women in patriarchal gender arrangements. The Census data have not captured indigenous men's roles and tasks or the multitasking of Pacific women: they have captured neither the meaning nor the expression of the phenomena we are calling cultural obligation and volunteering.

Some faafaletui also groups referred to an anomaly in that an institution like the IRD that enumerates and makes tax deductible Pacific people's financial contributions to fa'alavelave or to the church and church organisations is also the institution that oversees government's income supports. They expressed a lack of confidence in an institution that both enumerates and then has the power to prosecute or punish.

Enumerations and tabulations of contributions for Pacific peoples have had both positive and negative impacts – while the declaration of church contributions is an act of transparency, it has also encouraged public competition over contributions that has made some families vulnerable. Acts of support and assistance of the relational self are counted in such a way that the sacred offerings and spaces of protection are laid bare in the public domain – the spiritual nature of these is made noa.

Any system of documentation and enumeration needs to be analysed for its ability to capture the nuances of contributions and entitlements with their underlying structure and values. Not to do so allows values and practices to continue to be adjusted to the dominant social science and *palagi* structures and values of New Zealand. The end result is colonisation of alofa, 'ofa, aroha; and degradation of cultural values and meaning.

### **Expression**

The expression of cultural obligation and volunteering is both about artefacts – or what people do – and about the makers of the artefacts – or who does the fashioning, passes on the

knowledge, and holds, adapts or relinquishes in the face of change. The expression, while being a surface manifestation, is also the encapsulation of meaning, motive, role and responsibility; it is about the contextual self and the relational self. In a setting such as New Zealand, where the conception of self and all the social structures in which that self lives and relates are based on completely alien premises, understandings and values, it is possible for the core realisations of the Pacific concepts of cultural obligation and volunteering to be thrown up in a new light. As well as telling us what, which and who, a discourse on the expression of cultural obligation and volunteering adds to our understanding of how and why: it is only in expression of a culture that its values are revealed, and only in the living of that culture that it has its being.

## **PART FIVE: DRAWING THE THREADS TOGETHER**

### **The Struggle for Context, the Struggle for Meaning**

#### **The Concepts of Cultural Obligation and Volunteering**

The concepts of obligation and volunteering are embedded in the cultural, political, economic and historical developments of Western Europe and North America. Indeed, they are pointed to as key concepts in the development of civil society which, along with the notions of social security, unpaid work and civic engagement, are underpinned by altruism and philanthropy.

In societies and systems based on the individual and the nuclear family, relational, reciprocal and communal values, concepts and practices are frequently seen as having disintegrated, as having ceased to be central to the values and motivations of these societies. The notion of civic society is therefore sometimes perceived to be an attempt to ‘replicate’ the reciprocal values of indigenous societies, to create a sense of community, and to duplicate the caring and obligatory nature of relational and communal societies. Such revisioning can be viewed as a withdrawal from communal and spiritual roots, and while it is extremely unlikely to be an accurate understanding of the range of behaviours and mores that exist in such societies, it is nevertheless a way for people in social groups to restore community and psychic meaning to a state of being that has experienced rapid change, has lost its past stasis and certainty, and is displaying a perceptible sense of anomie and alienation.

This study of Pacific conceptions of cultural obligation and volunteering first of all explores the historical, cultural, social and economic origins of the two concepts, and thus provides a context for their present dominance in the social security, civil society and civic engagement lexicons (the literature review). By acknowledging this context, the study is not asserting that the individual and bounded self of the Western mindset is unable to relate, to connect and to behave in altruistic ways; instead, it is suggesting that all societies try to find ways to function together, to co-operate and to act for the greater good. There are differences, however, that are multi-dimensional, involving time, space, the space between and the nature of human relationships. Broadly, these differences need to be ascertained so that the dynamics and values that characterise smaller-scale, more traditional, more relational societies, especially in a context of power imbalance and majority–minority status, can be named, defined and understood.

The study therefore goes on to reveal the range, typography and character of Pacific volunteering and obligatory behaviour, and the meaning, motivations and values behind the behaviour (the case studies and focus groups).

#### **Cultural Obligation: New Zealand and Pacific Understandings**

The notion of cultural obligation when it is used in the public service lexicon is premised on the idea of duty and the expectation that that duty must be fulfilled. There is thus an element of compulsion or enforcement that reinforces the idea of duty. At the same time, obligation in the context of the cash economy is underpinned by the free will and choice of the individuated self, which in turn is contained within boundaries and exists as a ‘being’ for itself. It is the juxtaposition of these two dynamics – of duty and of free will – that brings into focus the essential character and meaning of cultural obligation in the Western context.

Here, there is a sense that there are ways to behave that are regarded as obligatory and good, but that one always has a choice. This choice, seated in free will, may depend upon notions of goodness, honour and duty, and upon feelings of compassion, care and love. Thus, while the Western sense of cultural obligation is associated with both duty and compassion, others are separate and external to the self, and their welfare and wellbeing are separate and external. Although individuals may operate with compassion, the pull of connections of the bounded self in this kind of arrangement towards the welfare and wellbeing of others is less salient.

Obligations therefore between unrelated selves or individuated selves are enforced by ethics and morals: enactments become duty. This is a departure from the natural reciprocal supports that selves in relationship give to and take from each other.

Now we must turn to the use of the word 'obligation' in Pacific contexts. First, it is clear that it is laden with several non-Pacific meanings. For example, the concept of 'duty' was introduced into Pacific mindsets through Christianity and theology, and the word became part of Pacific vocabularies and Pacific experiences:

*'obligation is underpinned by an enforced sense of duty ...' (FFG1)*

*'Obligation is premised on duty' (FFG1)*

And according to a young people's Faafaletui focus group, the word obligation itself is not a 'nice word'. They would prefer that it took on new meanings of 'giving and sharing' (Tokelau young people's Faafaletui focus group).

In the Pacific context, clearly there is less a sense of enforceability than an acceptance that the acts in question have to be done. The compulsion is cultural rather than punitive, inclusive rather than dividing. For this reason, the term cultural obligation is more appropriate to a Pacific context than the unqualified term 'obligation'.

This is mostly because Pacific conceptions of obligation are embedded in relational arrangements, responsibilities and contributions and in *alowha*, *loloma*, *fakalofa*, *'ofa*, *aroa* and *alofa*. Rather than obligations being enforced by a sense of duty or compulsion, Pacific peoples fulfill obligations through a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging is expressed through *alowha*, *loloma*, *fakalofa*, *'ofa*, *aroa* and *alofa*. The FFG1 said that the fulfillment of obligations would be mechanical and laborious if there was an element of enforcement. The wellspring is the heart, seated within a relational self.

This brings up the issue of a word's meaning and its cultural resonance and truth as well as its philosophical boundedness. A word like 'obligation' is, in its English meaning, so constrained by notions of duty, expectation, compulsion and enforcement that there is little room within it to incorporate Pacific values of concern, love and sacredness. It is not a malleable word, and it cannot be used in the context of Pacific *aroha*, care, concern, relational interaction and sense of belonging without distorting the nature of that behaviour. Words are not plastic: they are flexible only to a limited degree beyond which they can no longer be used – another term must be found.

### **Volunteering: New Zealand and Pacific Understandings**

The second word we consider here is 'volunteering'. Volunteering is a concept that is grounded in and depends upon the notions of 'free will' and 'choice'. Free will in this instance means that which is decided without constraint or that which is decided of one's own volition or with one's own liberty, unconstrained by external circumstances or by an agency such as fate or divine will. Free will can also mean that for which one can be held morally

accountable.<sup>36</sup> Choice in this instance means that which has been considered and judged to have sufficient merit to determine volition.

The concept of volunteering, birthed out of the economic context of the cash economy, is imbued with the values of that kind of society, in which free will, choice and the individual self are central. The United Nations has identified three basic criteria to distinguish volunteering from other types of human activity. These are:

- voluntary action is not rewarded with wage or salary;
- it is undertaken of one's free will although the decision may be influenced by personal feelings of obligation to society or one's own cultural tradition;
- it benefits a third party or society.

Consider the following definition used in Australia:

Formal volunteering is an activity which takes place through not for profit organisations or projects and is undertaken:

- to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer;
- of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion;
- for no financial payment; and
- in designated volunteer positions only.<sup>37</sup>

*The emphasis is on the individual volunteer and her or his free will, and the absence of payment, within an institutional setting.*

Attempts to adjust the concept of 'volunteer' to the New Zealand context define volunteering as 'a two-way exchange of humanity' or 'an activity that involves reciprocity'.<sup>38</sup> A definition provided to Hon. Tariana Turia when she became Minister for the Voluntary Sector in late 2008 reads as follows:

The definition of voluntary work being upheld by members of Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ) is that it is done of one's own free will, unpaid, for the common good.

To be a voluntary activity there should be no coercion involved, for example, from peer/family pressure or statutory regulation. The activity should also not be for personal benefit (financial or similar). It should benefit a wider group but also be for the good of society generally. ...

While volunteering must avoid coercion, people nevertheless often feel a strong sense of responsibility, even obligation in their volunteering. Doing

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<sup>36</sup> For definitions of free will, see [www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com) and *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.

<sup>37</sup> Volunteering Australia Inc., *Definitions and Principles of Volunteering*, 2009 ([www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org)).

<sup>38</sup> DIA, 2001 see bibliography.



something of one's own free will is different from doing something simply as a matter of choice.<sup>39</sup>

While the Australian and New Zealand definitions of volunteering point to a re-conceptualisation of volunteering based on mutuality and reciprocity, they do not release volunteering from the ties of the individuated self. The individual self is autonomous, independent and rational, and acts in its own self-interest. It presupposes the primacy of the individual and thus its fundamental separation from obligatory connections or relationships to other peoples, lands, waters and God(s), as is common in Pacific conceptions. The individuated self and the relational self do not co-exist easily in equilibrium. Rather, the individual self is the basis of modern post-industrial states and thus provides a norm for their economic and social policy formulations. When these social policy formulations attempt to adjust the relational self to its models and policies, distortions inevitably occur. In the context of the cash economy, volunteering is thus an act of free will chosen by unrelated individuals who do not commit themselves to an ongoing relationship with each other that is based upon mutuality and reciprocity.

The term 'volunteering' drew responses of dismay in the Faafaletui focus groups:

*'... it's a horrible word' (Pan Pacific young people's Faafaletui focus group).*

Participants decided that this reaction is due to the belief that *'volunteering is what we do to strangers ...'*. Volunteering for Pacific peoples is therefore linked with actions performed through free will or choice for people or organisations external to one's aiga or aiga-like formations, and one's sense of belonging or family (extended or otherwise):

*'In the Cook Islands and Samoa there is no such thing as voluntary – it's our way of life' (Pan Pacific elders' Faafaletui focus group)*

*'Volunteering is going down the road and giving blood to a stranger' (FFG7).*

It was made clear that volunteering is not an adequate concept to explain actions of assistance within aiga and aiga-like formations, or to the peoples, lands and waters to which Pacific peoples belong. Volunteering or voluntary effort cannot explain the contributions made within aiga because it presumes that people are individuated and separate from each other:

*'I am Tongan and I have a large extended family. As a girl I used to look after my grandfather ... freely knowing I am not being paid for doing his washing or cooking for him. We do this out of respect for him ... I [grew] up that way' (FFG13F).*

Out of free will, individuated selves momentarily volunteer assistance or help and then separate again from the one who has been helped. The voluntary effort is one-directional: it exists in a mindset that is different from the reciprocal and mutual nature of Pacific assistance, support and giving. Further, it dismisses the relational nature of Pacific notions of self:

*'With volunteering you have a choice to, but when it comes to faalavelave, well, we don't have a choice, it's not volunteering at all' (FFG17)*

*'I think volunteer is – you choose to go' (FFG14F).*

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<sup>39</sup> See [www.volcan.org.nz/paper\\_BriefingDocumentForMinisterForTheVoluntarySector.pdf](http://www.volcan.org.nz/paper_BriefingDocumentForMinisterForTheVoluntarySector.pdf)

The elders' and young people's Faafaletui focus groups considered that Pacific peoples have a moral, ethical and spiritual responsibility to care for, support and assist aiga. Caring for, supporting and assisting one's aiga, matakeinanga, magafaoa, matavuvale and kainga is not a choice. The choice not to care for, support and assist aiga is therefore seen to be invalid, unethical and immoral – it is a denial of belonging:

*'We are taught that to look after our families is morally good – not to look after our families is morally bad – therefore ethically there is no choice but to look after our families' (FFG1).*

In summary, volunteering grounded in individual free will and choice has no ongoing commitment and is, as one young people's Faafaletui focus group put it:

*'Palagi-teering' (FFG7).*

The word volunteering, because of its prevalence in the public domain and its dominance in economic and social policy lexicons, has sometimes been used by Pacific peoples to mean that which is freely given or shared:

*'It's not a paid thing – it's about giving' (Niue young people's Faafaletui focus group).*

Such an understanding, and the viability of such plasticity of meaning, has much to do with the theological syntax established by over 150 years of Christianity in the Pacific. Christian teachings and theological concepts have in some cases influenced indigenous religious and cultural concepts and structures and in others replaced them. They have certainly broadened the meaning of the term 'volunteer' to include works of mercy, works of love and works of service. This has enabled volunteering or that which is done out of free will or choice to appear benign and consistent with the responsibilities and enactments of the relational self. The difference is that the works of mercy or love carried out by the relational selves are reciprocal, mutual and embedded in connections that are timeless.

Theological concepts that are founded in ethics and emotion-based concepts such as love become the tropes on which volunteering in the cash economy is promoted; they may therefore provide a common ground from which voluntary activity may spring. As one focus group participant put it:

*'I do it because I love doing it and I love helping and I love the people, it's from the heart' (FFG 13).*

This could have equally been said by a palagi volunteer.

In the cash economy, social and economic arrangements are in the main situated in hierarchies or vertical arrangements in which there are power differentials. Work force arrangements such as careers are seen to be superior to 'job or work opportunities'. Likewise, professionals and professionalism are seen to be superior to volunteering and voluntary work. The power differentials that exist in the advantaged volunteer and the poor or needy recipient are now present in the 'professional' and 'voluntary' construct.

The dichotomy between the Western understanding of volunteerism and the innate cultural meaning of the concept is clear in the following statements made by various focus groups:

*'... here in New Zealand they are using our people [as] volunteers to fulfill their agendas and the kindness of our people's hearts to achieve their business agenda and calling them volunteers ...' (FFG2).*

*'I used to work for the ... refuge ... voluntarily ... there were people that worked there ... that [ran] the office. But us who go out into the community to deal with all these different women, we don't get paid anything' (Pan Pacific young people's Faafaletui focus group).*

*'... you help and then it's finished and then you sit back and think back and consider, "Hmmm ..., how many times have I helped that person and they never pay me?" ... it's always going on in your mind' (Cook Island Faafaletui focus group).*

*'... in the Pacific because we are neighbours, the voluntary act of giving [your neighbour] taro is part of our culture, and you move to New Zealand and your [Pacific] neighbour ... if you don't know them ... your giving stops' (Cook Island Faafaletui focus group).*

A major factor to be noted here is that Pacific notions of family are far broader than the notion of family common in Western contexts. It can refer to village, regional and genealogical connections, and thus help given to a distantly related person in another village is help given to one's family, which in turn is part of one's own identity and serves to reinforce and uphold that identity. Such help would not be thought of as volunteerism in the Western sense. In fact, volunteerism is primarily conceived of by Pacific peoples as acts of assistance or support to selves and organisations *outside* the self or family and family-like formations, regardless of pragmatism or relative wealth. Contributions and assistance offered to family members in such formations are the embodiments or enactments of roles and responsibilities of one to the other in these formations:

*'Volunteering is actually a horrible word ... it's our way of life. It's what we do. We're not volunteering to help our family' (FFG7).*

Contributions to the common good in a Pacific context have distinctive features. These are explicated by the case studies of six projects of pride. The distinctive features are:

- works in unity or in unison, for example, the Atafu he Matauala project;
- works that serve the community, for example, the Canterbury Fiji Social Services Trust;
- works of honour, love and respect, for example, Niue soldiers and their contribution to New Zealand in the First World War;
- works that restore cultural memory, for example, Wellington Tongan community contributions to the *Siu ki Moana* Exhibition;
- works that create places and spaces of belonging, for example, the Wellington Atiu Community contributions to the Atiu-nui-maruarua hostel projects;
- works that restore connections and partnership, for example, the So'o ma le Hoani Waititi Marae project.

Works of assistance or the enactments of responsibility towards families, villages, communities and nations are never one-dimensional. Rather, they are expressions and embodiments of the self in relationship and the self that belongs to mutual and reciprocal arrangements:

*'I have to fulfill my relationship with my mum and dad by contribution .... it's a must to be part of your extended family, you have to be involved in these things ... that's your identity .... you don't come from an organisation, you come from a community' (Pan Pacific young people's Faafaletui focus group).*

*'Voluntary is in our blood, it has always been in our blood, it benefits our family or ourselves or our neighbours or our [extended families] ... it's always been there' (FFG2).*

## **Cultural Obligation and Volunteering: Summary**

In a Pacific context, cultural obligations are the mutual responsibility of the relational self for welfare and security. The concept of volunteerism has no direct equivalent in Pacific languages, but centres on the ideas of a mutual and reciprocal way of being and the contributions of the relational self. These responsibilities are fulfilled out of a sense of alofa and a belief in mutual and reciprocal security, wellbeing and belonging.

The two concepts of cultural obligation and volunteering highlight the integrated concepts of belonging, participation and acknowledgement that are the heritage of a Pacific relational and reciprocal self.

An analysis of the Niue case study gives up some of the finer points of a Pacific understanding of the behaviour we know as volunteering. Volunteering for war is an act of free will, the antithesis of which is conscription. What the 200 to 250 Niuean men<sup>40</sup> who enlisted for the army in the years leading up to the First World War did was to respond to a call for help from New Zealand, and specifically to the face-to-face request made by Maui Pomare when he visited Niue. This request was based on relationship, responsibility and loyalty, and the Niuean response was generous in the extreme. The elements that are most salient are the 'voluntary' nature of the response, based certainly on free will but also arising out of a sense of family ties. That men of this tiny island nation could offer themselves to a world that to most of them was totally unknown and to a theatre of war for which they could have no possible comprehension says much about the paramountcy of the notion of honour and response-ability with which their culture is imbued.

It also shows the quintessential nature of Pacific concepts of cultural obligation and volunteering, and of the notions of duty and free will. Whereas duty in a Western sense has a negative connotation, in a Pacific context it is positive: duty carries with it the elements of belonging, of relationship, of mutual support and all that being part of a family and society entails. Whereas duty and free will are antithetical in Western societies, duty is a freedom in itself in Pacific cultures because it is grounded in belongingness.

## **Research Method and the Social Science Lens**

Through its literature review and Faafaletui focus groups, the study shows that when research questions, methods and findings that are monocultural and Eurocentric are imposed on Pacific peoples, they lead to distortions and exclusions. Further, when Pacific concepts, values and practices are examined through monocultural and Eurocentric lenses, the material may be misinterpreted. While facts or figures may be 'empirically correct', they may be interpreted erroneously. Such errors contribute to misconceptions about Pacific cultures and peoples and may be promoted as social science truths to which Pacific cultures and concepts are adjusted.

This study suggests that ethnocentric and Eurocentric understandings of cultural obligation and volunteering may have limited the interpretation and enumeration of Pacific cultural obligation and volunteering behaviour, for the following reasons:

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<sup>40</sup> While between 200 and 250 men, enlisted, 150 went overseas as soldiers in the First World War.

- There is little available literature on Pacific people's conceptions and practice of volunteering and cultural obligations.
- The available literature identifies terms that are linked to cultural obligations and volunteering but does not identify or explicate the structural and historical origins of these terms.
- These terms are heuristically identified or translated into the available or preferred constructions of the disciplines in which they occur.
- The underlying systems, structures and values that gave birth to these concepts and practices remain invisible, so that the cultural context remains hidden and these terms are therefore perceived as international and intercultural.
- This results in a substantial underestimation of the contribution to civil society that Pacific Island people make, because measuring tools such as the New Zealand Census question on volunteering ask questions that have a quite different meaning to people who have a relational as opposed to an individual understanding of self.

Thus, the responsibilities that were placed on the research team included:

- making the materials from the Faafaletui focus groups and case studies the key and primary focus for this research;
- extending the research approach and method to ensure that there would be multiple checks on translation and analysis of the data to ensure their validity and correctness;
- extending the question line into conceptual frames to capture the underpinning concepts, philosophies, values, structures and practices of volunteering and cultural obligations;
- maintaining a sense of respect and inspiration which is the base unit of any social arrangements and practices;
- reflecting the primacy of relational and mutual selves in the methodology as well as the subject matter;
- allowing the data to reveal relational, metaphoric and spiritual meaning and beliefs.

## **What We Know**

### **A Pacific Sense of Self**

The self is defined by and located in relationships, connections and interconnections to aiga, magafaoa, kainga, groups, clans, village, motu, province, confederacy and country. These are the organising and interrelating structures that define roles and responsibilities for care and support of their members throughout their lives. From a Pacific perspective they are all spiritual.

The self is also identified by genealogy and by its 'places of belonging'. The self that relates through genealogy to ancestors and to the land and the waters also relates through genealogy to the God(s) or Atua within the sacred space of va.

The self in relationship has emotional, spiritual, physical, mental and, cultural elements that are interrelated and cannot be separated. They constitute the whole self in

relationship. Responsibility to care for aiga or family members includes care at all these levels.

The relational self is inclined towards selflessness, which focuses attention on others with whom one is in relationship and the nature of that relationship rather than on the individuated self.

The concepts of alofa, alowha, aroa, loloma, 'ofa and fakalofa are primary to the relational self and are informed by cultural structures that provide guidelines on their expression. They are premised on face-to-face relationships or being in the presence of the other emotionally, spiritually, physically, mentally and, in New Zealand, culturally. The visibility of the self enables people to act supportively at times of vulnerability or at significant life events.

The selves that relate in aiga have assigned roles and responsibilities, the fulfillment of which brings a sense of self-worth and wholeness. Pacific cultures pass down from ancestors through many generations histories, memories, stories and values as well as etiquettes and protocols of being, relating and contributing.

In New Zealand, palagi culture establishes and regulates norms through education, law, the writing of history and its other institutions. Pacific young people growing up in New Zealand sometimes take on palagi values, attitudes and practices that are based on individualism and free will. Field data identified that being born into two worlds afforded Pacific peoples the abilities and possibilities to take the best from both and that both cultures provide unique ways to view and understand the world.

Young people's exposure to other cultures enabled a deep reflection and insight into the positive elements of Pacific cultures and beliefs. However, it was also pointed out that exposure to the dominant culture sometimes intensified their negative feelings about their own.

This study found that Pacific people in general find wholeness and a positive identity in participating in communal works. The self in relationship has roles, responsibilities, rights and entitlements that become one's heritage. It is in the fulfillment of one's heritage that one finds healing, wholeness and self-worth. The highly valued responsibility to serve (tautua) was identified by elders and young people as giving meaning and binding aiga, magafaoa, kainga, groups, clans, family, village, motu, provinces and national structures together.

## **A Pacific Sense of Relationship**

The selves connected in aiga, magafaoa, kainga, group, clan and families exist in structures that are unique to each Pacific nation. These family structures assign roles, responsibilities and status as well as providing a frame on which daily family rituals and ceremonies of significant life events are organised. Family structures in Pacific nations are elaborate and give prominence to the place of ancestors, elders, leaders and, in some nations, sisters. These structures set out clear protocols or guidelines of etiquette at both the intra-familial and inter-familial levels.

In Tokelau, for example, decisions about family land usage are not made within family structures, but are made by taupulega (Council of Elders). Family structures determine primary familial relationships that may be between grandparents and grandchildren, between matai and aiga, between parents and children, or between sisters and brothers. These primary relationships assign roles and responsibilities that are lifelong and sometimes intergenerational.

Primary familial relationships are protected and connected with each other through the *va fealoaki* (relationship of respect between two or more people). These relationships and relational arrangements are seen as sacred or *tapu*.

Pacific gender arrangements accord position and status, and define roles, responsibilities and tasks. They sometimes centre on the sister–brother relationship, and fundamentally maintain a sense of place and belonging for all members of society. Gender arrangements also become a basis for village and *motu* social and structural organisation, and sometimes enable both men and women to take leadership and political decision-making roles. The imposition of European patriarchal gender arrangements brought in through the missionaries and colonial projects has had an impact and sometimes distorted and replaced indigenous gender arrangements, while at the same time the extensive work that has been done in *palagi* societies to bring balance to gender relationships has had a broadening and including effect. Adaptation and resourcefulness have always been characteristics of Pacific cultures.

In the same way that relational arrangements are inclusive and in many ways seamless, the physical context of the subsistence economy is cyclic and is premised on the spiritual relationships between people and their environment. Gender and social arrangements in the context of subsistence economies are expressed, reinforced and upheld by elaborate cultures of sharing and distribution. At times of abundance the relationship between humans and the land and waters, crops and fish are celebrated by rituals of welcome, distribution and use. The focus groups noted the fact that the first produce has traditionally gone to leaders, elders, sisters or people who hold significant status within families and communities; and that sometimes the best produce is saved for visitors.

The *inati* system of distribution and sharing in Tokelau, as identified in the Tokelauan case study, ensured that each household in a village would receive a share of the day's fishing or agricultural produce.

This abundance and availability is sometimes disrupted by natural disasters such as cyclones that can destroy crops and may cause *oge* or times when specific crops are in short supply. The *So'o* structure explicated in the Samoa case study establishes rituals of connection between the parties who are requesting and those that are assisting in these times of shortage and need.

This context of a subsistence economy that is often abundant, available and accessible defines gender roles in which women and men participate in cultivation, fishing and the harvesting of produce, and carry out specific tasks. There is therefore a distinct gendering of production and distribution of roles and these distinctions flow into other social, political and familial gender arrangements, but are in flux and change: traditional ways of social organisation are not static and moribund.

## **Reciprocity and Mutuality**

The two concepts of reciprocity and mutuality are central to the notion of selves in relationship, and are also rooted in a constant awareness of the linkages between people and the environment in cyclic time and in Pacific subsistence economies.

Chronological or linear time constrains relationships and distorts the natural rhythms of support that are inherent in reciprocal and mutual arrangements that are relational and part of a cyclic life style. When the present is valued so that it stands distinct from the past and the future, relationships and reciprocal and mutual arrangements are adapted to the constraints of present time. Further, the cash economy disrupts the cycles of nature, reciprocity and

mutuality, thus making Pacific people dependent on produce procured with disposable income.

The structure and ethos of reciprocal and mutual arrangements does not necessarily mean that people give in order to receive. Rather, relational selves give in order that the avega, kavenga or burden is lightened on those to whom one is related. This was well explicated in all six case studies. The shared key motivating factor was to ensure that cultural responsibility, the restoration and revitalisation of relationships, and the passing on of traditional practices would be carried together.

## **Contributions and How they are Made**

Pacific practices of contribution have been handed down from ancestors through many generations to the present. The knowledge of forms, etiquette and protocols has been taught through example and participation, and encouraged by the messages of alofa, 'ofa, aroa and love that accompany contribution.

Further, Pacific people are encouraged to contribute by seeing first hand the positive outcomes of their contributions. The six case studies are an illustration of this. As was pointed out in the case studies, Faafaletui focus group findings and the Literature Review, the maintenance of Pacific people's cultures and practices of contribution is dependent on everyone's contribution to live these out and to pass them on to the next generation.

Contributions are in the end a way of honouring and enlivening the relationship and the need to have that supported, remembered and/or restored. The Wellington Tongan community contribution to the National Library Exhibition and the So'o project are examples of contributions that restore memories of connection.

The six case studies and the Faafaletui focus group findings point to the costly and highly valued contributions of ancestors and the past generation including the present generation of elders. They also acknowledge the precious contributions of children and young people. The greatest contributions young Pacific peoples make, as identified in the case studies and the Faafaletui focus groups, is when they proudly express their connection with their cultural groups and show their parents, elders and community that they have picked up the skills, enactments and values of their cultures and their gendered roles.

## **Pacific Wellbeing**

The self that relates to the land, waters, God(s) or Atua, and through genealogy to the ancestors, experiences wellbeing when these relationships are in harmony or are in balance. The self in relationship to the ancestors and to other people through genealogical connections finds wellbeing when those connections are honoured, respected and protected. The sacred relationship between people, the ancestors, the lands, the waters and their God(s) is central to the self and its wellbeing. Wellbeing can therefore be seen as a spiritual state.

The ability to protect the land, waters, genealogies and spiritual connections or heritage is critical to self worth. The fulfillment of the responsibility to guard and protect brings a sense of honour and therefore wellbeing. Wellbeing is experienced in the give and take of reciprocity and mutuality.

When all the elements of the self in relationship are in balance or in harmony, then wellbeing is experienced. The self in relationship finds wellness when all other selves to whom it is related are well or are being cared for.

In New Zealand, wellbeing is also connected to other needs and dynamics, such as having a good education, having a job, owning a home and being able to provide for one's



family. Pacific peoples migrated to New Zealand partly to secure a good education for their children so they could fulfill roles and responsibilities and ensure that their heritages are protected and developed. Education is therefore a key to Pacific wellbeing, since it provides life skills, secures future employment, and brings honour and status to families and family members.

Wellbeing is exemplified in collective and community behaviour, with each person having a place and being valued.

## Meaning, Expression and Words

It is apparent that there are several English words used in this study that convey the key subject matter being dealt with, which has most commonly been called cultural obligation and volunteering. But a large number of words are also used that are partial synonyms for each other, and their proliferation may be indicative of an attempt to locate meaning where meaning is hard to define. It is important to be as precise as possible in trying to describe what is known and understood about these concepts, and thus to identify their application, usage and expression; but it is also important to examine the words critically and analytically.

The words in List 1 (below), those that describe the phenomena we call cultural obligation and volunteering, range from words that infer a giving out that occurs in a relational context (the things that I do for you, the things that you do for me), for example, contribution, service, giving, (re)distribution; to those that imply something done by one person for another where there is no ongoing relationship and where there may be a sense of inequality, for example, obligation, volunteering, unpaid work. The first four words (contribution, service, giving, [re]distribution) are enabling words: they do not suggest a limited, time-bounded, capitalistic type of exchange. Instead they fit within and reflect a Pacific sense of self that is relational, spiritual, psychic and emotional. This self feels safe only when other selves with whom it is in relationship are in a state of wellbeing: wellbeing is cyclical, like time. The self that is whole and spiritual is not disembodied and unattached. The last three words within this group also contain notions of relationship, but this has a different character and quality, and is less important than concepts that privilege the individual self over the relational self. While obligation implies some notion of relationship, for example, it is still a rules-based word that infers issues of personal conscience and decision-making that casts light more on the person doing the ‘obliging’ rather than on those who are ‘obliged’.

### List 1. Cultural Obligation and Volunteering

- contribution
- service
- giving
- (re)distribution
- obligation
- volunteering

It is argued here that Pacific people are much more socially connected than palagi New Zealanders, and that where social networks that include kin groups end, behaviour such as volunteering begins:

*'If we do things for people who are unrelated it's voluntary in the sense that it is optional'*  
(Cluny Macpherson, personal communication, 7 July 2009).

The entity called 'unpaid work' is the least relational of all these terms. Within cultures that privilege relationship, it would be unthinkable to label the sorts of behaviours we have loosely gathered under the English words cultural obligation and volunteering 'unpaid work'; it would also be offensive. It is the least appropriate of all these terms and has the worst 'fit'. The fact that it is so prevalent in international writing about volunteering, and in New Zealand government documents, is therefore a major concern.

The words in List 2 (below) – those that encapsulate the relational aspects of cultural obligation and volunteering – all incorporate some of the nuances of relationship that are present in a Pacific sense of self and wellbeing. The majority of them capture the sense of the self existing in relationship with and awareness of the other, that is expressed as follows:

... the Samoan does not exist as an individual. There is myself and yourself. Through you, my being is contextually meaningful and whole. Through myself, you are given primacy in light of our collective identity and place of belonging (fa'asinomaga), our genealogical lineage (tupuaga), and our roles, responsibilities and heritage (tofiga).<sup>41</sup>

Thus, reciprocity, mutuality, responsibility, care, community, commonality, support and collectivity are relational words in which there is a sense of balance between the 'I' that gives and the 'I' that receives, and the creation and maintenance of relationship that emerges from this state of being. The notions of exchange and duty are less relational, more rules-based concepts: I give you this and then you'll give me that; and I give you this because I have to, because I am obliged to.

### **List 2. The Relational Aspects of Cultural Obligation and Volunteering**

- reciprocity
- mutuality
- responsibility
- care
- community
- commonality
- support
- collectivity
- exchange
- duty

The words in List 3 (below), those that describe the psychic responses involved in volunteering and cultural obligation, lie on a continuum that ranges from freewill to rule-boundedness. If a system is rules-based, then people can choose not to obey the rules or to obey the rules. There is therefore an implied sense of rightness and wrongness, as well as a

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<sup>41</sup> Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave, 1997, p. 28.

sense of the supremacy of the individual. Freewill is often posited as an example of freedom, of a social good, and an indication of social and political health. The idea of democracy is inclusive of and places value on freewill, for example. If relationality is a central value and psychic truth in a society, however, the emphasis on the individual and their discrete actions disappears. There is a cyclic sense of relationship within a cyclic sense of time within which the self is firmly rooted. When a system is not rules-based, people on the deepest and most psychic levels do not have to choose to obey the rules or not to obey the rules: instead they are part of a relational matrix in which their role brings them into relational proximity with others, which is in itself a social good.

### **List 3. The Psychic Responses Involved in Cultural Obligation and Volunteering**

- freewill
- choice
- ‘owing’
- rules
- roles

The words in List 4 (below) – those that describe or partially describe what may be called the consequences or outcomes of cultural obligation and volunteering – again reflect the differences between a Pacific and palagi sense of self. The following explication may help to describe a Pacific sense of self:

The whole person exists, not as an individual, but in relationship with other people. This being has meaning only in relationship, and derives its sense of wholeness, sacredness and uniqueness from its place of belonging in its family and village, its genealogy, language, land, environment and culture.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, identity, belonging and participation are innate states of being as well as consequences of the lived relationships that reinforce these states of being. The achievement of balance is parallel with a sense of respect, and even more with a sense of wellbeing. Wellbeing is a reflection of the health of living well, living socially, living with others who are also living well, all held together in a web of relationships. The other end of the spectrum includes words like entitlement, rights and access that suggest an implicit reward, an expectation of being a recipient, a cause and effect system that is metaphorically a reflection of the cash economy system.

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<sup>42</sup> Op. cit., p. 83.

#### List 4. The Consequences or Outcomes of Cultural Obligation and Volunteering

- entitlement
- rights
- access
- relationship
- identity
- belonging
- participation
- respect
- wellbeing

Generally, then, what New Zealand might call a social security system, based on social capital, is a rules-based system in which notions like altruism and equality are expressed through redistributive formulae. The self is individual, disembodied and unattached; it has a right or sense of entitlement to call on support because it has provided support in the past (in linear time) or because the state can act by proxy as a 'self' in a society in which relationality has become less important than individuality.

When, in a Pacific sense, self A helps self B today, this does not mean that B has to reciprocate to A at a certain time in a certain way. What is important is that B is now in relationship with A and A with B, which means that there will be a right time to reciprocate, and a right way to reciprocate. The driver here is the relationship, not duty, rules, rights or notions of equality. The driver is spiritual, social, psychic and emotional: it is also love.

There is a sense in which many of the English words that are used to express aspects of the cultural obligation and volunteering paradigm are reflections of the Western philosophical tradition and the lexicon of Christianity. There are similarly conceptual words in all Pacific languages, and part of the complexity of the problem of meaning and interpretation is the overlap between the English and Pacific words. While there are certain similarities, there are also differences, but the differences are often subsumed by the English word and all its meanings. The fact that most Pacific peoples adopted Christianity wholeheartedly as long as 150 years ago means that the adoption and application of Christian values and understandings to endemic world views have been entrenched and thorough. It is well known that missionaries adapted indigenous concepts that were close enough to Christian ones, altering them in the process. For example, the Samoan word *tofi* means responsibility for heritage, in the sense of the entirety of where a person is from and what their calling is – even their identity, and certainly their ability to empower and assist each other – but in Christian terms this word has tended to be more equated with duty and privilege.

The meaning of *alofa*, love, while being close to the concept of *agape* and to the core teachings and philosophy of Jesus Christ and Christianity, has been changed in the Christian setting from being primarily the expression of a relational state of mutuality and reciprocation/ redistribution, to an altruism that is not necessarily dependent on relationship. The base word of *alofa* in Samoan is *alo* – meaning face to face – and therefore *alofa* (and its other Pacific forms, *alowha*, *aroa*, *loloma*, *'ofa* and *fakalofa*) describes an act of love that exists because of a relationship, because the other person is someone you face, who is in your vision (even if not physically). Actions of care and responding to, actions that embody,

express and perpetuate wellbeing are thus reframed as actions of kindness that have an external driver. When a term like alofa is Christianised a power differential is often set up in which one person is strong and the other is weak. This is why the English terms derived from it fit so neatly within a social justice perspective rather than a cyclical relational one.

In Pacific Island languages there are several words that have no straightforward equivalent in English. Rather than having synonyms, they have to be explained in phrases (as in the example of tofi, above). Another example is the Cook Island term apaipai that means lifting your hand, having responsibility towards the enua, being actively involved in reaching out. In Tongan, tauhi va and tauhi 'eiki express the sense of what a person does in order to be part of, to be in relationship, to maintain and keep their reciprocal obligations and relationships.

There are two Samoan words and concepts that are particularly helpful in enumerating and encapsulating the heart of what we have been calling cultural obligation and volunteering. The first is tautua (in Cook Island, tauturu) that is best expressed by the English word service. The concept of service is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary (among several meanings) as 'Person's disposal or behalf ... ready to obey orders or be used. .... What employee or subordinate or vassal is bound to, work done, or doing of work, on behalf of employer, benefit conferred on or exertion made on behalf of someone, expression of willingness to confer and make these'. Webster's Dictionary opens this up a little more: 'work done for others ... to be of use to or for ... friendly help or professional aid'. The key concepts in these definitions are 'on behalf of', 'willingness', 'for others', 'friendly help'. If we dispense with the Latin root word servitium, or servus, meaning slave, we have an English word that may have more neutrality than a word like volunteering since it has not as frequently been used to describe the sorts of acts of altruism often referred to by the catch-word volunteering. Service also has connotations from its medieval and renaissance usage of deeds done with love and acts performed within a reciprocal and balanced relationship in which roles are of more significance than hierarchy and power.

The second concept is that of fesoasoani, the base word of which is soa, meaning to be a partner in something. The word fesoasoani would be used when someone is about to walk back from the plantation and has a heavy load to carry. The word, offered by someone standing nearby (face to face), means, 'I am your partner and I will carry the load with you.' Fesoasoani can be translated as help, enable or assist, based on the premise that the two people are partners and between them they can carry the load. One is not saying to the other, 'Let me carry it for you'; nor are they saying, 'Here, let me carry it because I'm stronger than you.' Instead, they are equal partners. The image is of two people walking along together with a heavy load strung on a pole that they each shoulder. The metaphor is of equal enabling, equal help and equal beingness, expressed in relationship. In this sense the word is different from the Christian concepts of altruism and loving kindness in that these are based on the primacy of the individual rather than of relationship: it is the carrying *together* that is of significance rather than the fact that help is offered by one person to another. The act of carrying together symbolises and breathes life into the relationship that motivated the help in the first place and perpetuates relationship in a timeless manner. This is a useful image that contains within itself the spiritual, psychic, social and psychological dimensions of what we have been calling cultural obligation and volunteering.

This brings us to the issue at the heart of this research: the terminology used in New Zealand official documents, and notably the census forms, that is trying to convey the sense of cultural obligation and volunteering. The fact is that, for the many reasons enumerated above,

the terms in use are not inclusive and do not suggest the sorts of cultural obligation and volunteering activities that Pacific peoples regularly take part in.

Statistics New Zealand in its 2001 Pacific Profiles refers to unpaid work as a synonym for 'voluntary activities', which includes 'household work, looking after a child or ill person, as well as working for a community group'. The latter is also referred to as 'voluntary work for an organisation'. 'Household work' includes 'cooking, repairs and gardening'.

The Highlights from the 1996 Census on unpaid work define it as covering: caring for others and household work; teaching, coaching, and training; administrative and policy work; and fund-raising.

The QuickStats produced after the 2006 Census broke unpaid work into 'three broad categories: unpaid work that occurs within the household; unpaid work that occurs outside the household; and other voluntary work through an organisation, group or marae'. It goes on to elaborate, 'Unpaid work within the household includes household work, childcare and caring for another member of the household who is ill or has a disability', with the most common household work being 'cooking, repairs and gardening'.

However, it is clear that there are grave anomalies in the terminology and consequently in the statistical results as they apply to people of Pacific (and probably other) ethnicities. Caring for someone either in the household or outside it, whether a child, someone ill or disabled, or someone otherwise needing care, would not be regarded as 'work' by most Pacific people. The 2006 Census results, therefore, which show that 13.6% of Pacific males and 22.1% of Pacific females looked 'after a child who does not live in own household', are more likely to indicate the few who re-frame the question of their caring in palagi terms rather than being a true indication of the numbers involved in such care. (This may also account for the reason that the equivalent Maori statistics are 17.8% and 30.6% respectively – because they have had longer to acculturate and reframe.)

In Samoan terms specifically and Pacific terms generally, all that occurs within, on behalf of and in relation to the aiga is not something that can be called volunteering or unpaid work. The mercantile, uni-directional and finite implications of volunteering and unpaid 'work' do not capture the cultural meanings of social intercourse. A term like tautua and a metaphor like fesoasoani do.

## **Concluding Statement**

For Pacific peoples and other ethnic groups where the extended family forms the primary focus of social interaction, actions that may be described as 'voluntary' in the European context are not seen in this way. The sense of altruism that is part of Western volunteering is less important than notions of obligation, duty, reciprocity and mutuality in a Pacific context.

The case studies and the Faafaletui focus groups considered that Pacific peoples have a moral and ethical responsibility to care for, support and assist aiga. The matter of care, support and assistance to one's aiga, matakeinanga, magafaoa, matavuvale and kainga is not a choice. The choice therefore not to care for, support and assist aiga is seen to be unethical, immoral and non-sacred. For Pacific peoples, the focus is on reciprocal and mutual behaviour and relationship based on cyclic time and the relational self.

It is crucial that policy-making and data collection in New Zealand acknowledges and understands these cultural truths and differences so that behaviours are seen for what they are in their appropriate cultural context and policy is made accordingly.

## **PART SIX: POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

### **Implications for Policy**

#### **Theoretical Introduction**

Pacific civilisations and their integrated notions of social behaviour, wellbeing and the place of human beings in time and space are based on the concepts of belonging, participation, contribution and acknowledgement. These concepts form and inform the complex entity of the relational and reciprocal self and aiga that characterises Pacific peoples.

This study of cultural obligation and volunteering shows that in the Western context, these notions have specific meanings that are unlike their meanings in a Pacific context. Typically, in New Zealand these are monocultural concepts that are embedded in the market economies and individuated societies of the OECD nations. They are identified with altruism and philanthropy, which are ideals and concepts that overlap in some instances but are generally at odds with Pacific values.

A Pacific relational and reciprocal self located in aiga is the base unit in which Pacific civilisations and their integrated social, political, cultural, spiritual and ecological systems are embedded. These relational reciprocal selves in aiga and new aiga-like formations contribute towards people's welfare and wellbeing.

While these contributions and responsibilities share with volunteering and cultural obligation elements of altruism and commitment, the contributions and responsibilities of the relational self are very different from the contributions and responsibilities of the individual self. When the relational self acts reciprocally and mutually, first of all a sense of belonging is acknowledged, which leads to a sense of participation, which leads to acts of contribution, which in turn lead to a sense of acknowledgement and self-worth.

This creates a holistic, cohesive social system in which volunteering and cultural obligation are embedded. They are not external to this system but are part of it. Nor are they the drivers and motivators, as altruism is in Western systems of social security. Rather, the drivers and motivators spring from relationship.

If New Zealand social security arrangements and social policy formulations are to embrace the cultures that flourish in this country, then they will have to shed their monocultural basis and nature. They will need to address the ethnocentrism that currently informs policy-making, and see through other eyes so that not only behaviour and practices are more accurately understood, but also that motivations and values that are deeply cultural in nature are appreciated so that, for instance, acts of cultural obligation and volunteering can be better identified and enumerated.

It will only be when the notions of belonging, participation, contribution, acknowledgement and wellbeing are appreciated in the context of the relational self that Pacific conceptions of social security and citizenry will be recognised.

## Policy Recommendations

The document ‘Strengthening the community sector’ (from *He waka kotuia – Report 2002*) makes the point that there is a need to strengthen Maori and Pacific people’s ownership of their organisations, and that policy recommendations need to be culturally appropriate (Report, 2002, pp. 24–27). When policy-makers work in partnership with the organisations they make policies for, all things are possible.

Pacific conceptions of what we have called cultural obligation and volunteering need to be clearly defined in all relevant government documents, i.e. that cultural obligation involves the notions of service, a duty to care, a requirement to sustain the community, and a form of love and reciprocity; that it involves a sense of expectation and the fulfillment of roles; and that it is embedded in the relational self, which is in turn embedded temporally, spatially and spiritually in culture; and that volunteering is a concept that would normally not be used in a Pacific context about help given within what are broadly defined as familial relationships.

Calling help, support and the sorts of behaviours regarded as fulfilling cultural obligations as being ‘done without pay’ is culturally inappropriate and confusing. If census questions continue to refer to activities ‘done without pay’, then they will not enable Pacific Island peoples to indicate the true extent of their cultural obligation and volunteering behaviour, commitment and involvement. In continuing to use culturally narrow terminology, such questions not only bar Pacific peoples from being seen to contribute to New Zealand society to the extent that they do; but also their actions and involvement are placed outside of the notion of civic society in New Zealand. Such outcomes can exacerbate discrimination and reduce a sense of cohesion within and belonging to the society in question.

It would therefore be very helpful to carry out further research that focuses specifically on enumerating Pacific people’s contributions and mutual responsibilities, principally by bringing together key informants (Pacific people, statisticians, policy makers) in focus groups to read the present report and to develop questions that they think would elicit the fullest range of responses from Pacific peoples in the census questions (and elsewhere). It would be useful, also, to have as wide a sense as possible of the sorts of behaviours and activities that constitute cultural obligation and volunteering in order that the broader contributions that are not included at present could be encompassed. A database of all relevant Pacific organisations (including churches, educational organisations, sports bodies, social service groups and social and regional organisations), and details about the specific kinds of work they do would also be invaluable.

In order to follow this path, government would, of course, have to embrace such concepts as *tautua* and *fesoasoani*: if it does not, then it cannot in its definitions and questions be inclusive enough to embrace the range of Pacific contributions that exists. With the help of key informants, therefore, it is important that more appropriate questions are developed and rewritten using words that invite inclusion rather than establish exclusion and limits. Discussion would need to take account of the different notions of family and family boundaries in Pacific and Palagi/European cultures such that help to an outsider in Palagi culture is considered voluntary, whereas the equivalent in Pacific cultures is often considered to be within the family and not voluntary in the European sense.

Pacific contributions as identified in the case studies need to be publicly and specifically acknowledged, for example, the provision of a space for belonging (the Tokelau



and Cook Islands case studies), the provision of culturally-appropriate social services (the Fijian case study), the contribution of loyalty and support (the Niuean case study), the mounting of a major culturally significant exhibition (the Tongan case study), and the holding of a multi-ethnic event that created solidarity and healed some issues of difference and distance (the Samoan case study).

The invisible and unrecognised 'voluntary work', especially of older people and of women, must be acknowledged and enumerated.

It is important that Pacific conceptions of social capital are analysed and explicated, including the concepts of acknowledgement and wellbeing, in order that the fullness of the meaning of cultural obligation and volunteering in a Pacific sense is allowed to take root in New Zealand and to be embraced in government documents. Only when this occurs will policy be able to address and speak to Pacific sensibilities and understandings.

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