Wind in the Sails or Captain of the Va'a?

The Influence of the Global Education Agenda in the Samoan Education System

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to explore the influence of an international education agenda, particularly through the Education for All goals and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2, on the education system of Samoa. The findings of the research indicate that the priorities of the Samoan education policy are closely related to this second Millennium Development Goal, in particular with regards to access to education. Samoan education policies also relate to the emerging Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) when addressing educational quality. The emphasis on international goals is problematic as these goals do not take into consideration the context or culture-specific needs of the country, but rather reflect a combination of various underlying theories such as rights-based approaches and economic theories. The involvement of donors in the education system of Samoa was found to be strongly influenced by MDG 2. It also became evident that donors give priority to their own interests and their funding can easily change as priorities in development shift. This research has also found that there is an indigenous education agenda being constructed by rich academic discussions about the goals and purpose of education in the Pacific. These discussions are reinforced by selected regional initiatives, such as the Re-thinking Education Initiative and the Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of basic Education (PRIDE). Pacific education experts point out the importance of education being culturally relevant, as the current system is perceived as an alien force, and describe how, by its nature, the education system imposes incompatible values on the children of the Pacific. The Samoan education system was found to set its own course, while also incorporating international goals, donor priorities, the national level priorities and ideas presented by Pacific authors on education.

Acknowledgements

"Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom..."

(Bahá'u'lláh, 2005, pp. 259–60)

My research is inspired by the knowledge that all individuals have great potential, and that education is the means to reveal this potential and allow communities to flourish from the valuable contributions of all its members. This research project is dedicated to the young people of the Pacific Islands. The joy, humility, perseverance in the face of adversity, spirit of selfless service, eagerness to learn and true friendship that I have enjoyed in working alongside so many young Pacific Islanders is such a blessing. Education will always be my passion, because of the transformation that it can facilitate in allowing the "gems" of potential to shine through.

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Acronyms

ADB	Asia Development Bank
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
EFA	Education for All
ESP II	Education Sector Plan II
FBEAP	Forum Basic Education Action Plan
FEdMM	Forum Education Ministers Meeting
FPICs	Forum Pacific Island Countries
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
IDTs	International Development Targets
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MESC	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)
MWCSD	Ministry of Women, Culture and Social Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PILNA	Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PRIDE	Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of (basic) Education
PSET	Post-School Education and Training
RPEIPP	Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative for Pacific People by Pacific Peoples
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPBEQ	Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Quality

SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPECA	Samoa Primary Education Certification Assessment
SPELL	Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level Tests
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations

Glossary

Fa'asamoa	Referring to the 'Samoan way of life'
Va'a	Traditional sailing ship or canoe of Samoa
Matai	Samoan Elder, Leader, Chief
Kakala	Tongan word for a flower garland
'ainga	Extended family unit in Samoan

Chapter 1: Introduction

Wind in the sails or Captain of the Va'a? This question is at the heart of this research project as an analogy to reflect on the interaction of global and local forces in the field of education in the Pacific Island country of Samoa. A va'a is the Samoan term for a Polynesian sailing boat or canoe that was used by Polynesians to traverse the Pacific as explorers, conquerors and traders. These vessels relied on expert navigators using ancient techniques passed down through generations to move between islands. The captain of the va'a was the person responsible for the safe-keeping of everyone on the journey, who set the course and kept the va'a progressing to the destination. These va'a travelled by winds across the Pacific Ocean to reach their destinations.

The interaction of global forces and local needs can be understood by the analogy of a va'a. Just as the ancient Polynesians explored the Pacific, establishing settlements, dispersing crops and animals, education has been disseminated throughout the Pacific Islands mostly through missionaries and colonisers, at least initially. Overseas development assistance (ODA), or aid, has swept through the Pacific much like the trade winds that moved the ships, bringing with them both the advantageous and the less than favourable aspects. The va'a can be likened to education systems: spread across the oceans, a means of dispersing knowledge and shaping people's lives. When the va'a, or education system, is captained by those from the Pacific, the direction is being set by Pacific people, and the responsibility is being taken by Pacific people. Their guidance of the va'a, or education system, is based on an intimate knowledge of the purpose of the journey (education) and the manner (teaching methodologies, educational theories) in which the journey must be undertaken is informed by knowledge that has been passed through generations to ensure a safe passage (a successful life). The winds can be likened to the overseas assistance that is made available to education, they move the va'a (the education system) forward to the desired destination. However, when donors, through policy, allocated funding or other means take charge of the direction of education in the Pacific, they are acting as the Captain of the va'a by steering the direction, rather than allowing local agents to steer the course with the overseas assistance invisibly enabling the educational goals to be reached. The aim of exploration in this project, is whether

international forces are acting as the wind in the sails, or are they the captain of the va'a? Is the Samoan government captaining the direction of their education policies or are donors leading the direction?

1.1. Research Background

Development and international assistance are extremely influential forces in an increasingly globalised world. They affect many aspects of life in most countries of the "Global South" or "Third World", from agriculture and access to food, to hygiene and sanitation. Education has been given a priority place in the policies that govern international assistance to developing countries (Coxon & Baba, 2003). This is due to the significant influence that it can have on other areas of development such as health, gender, economic growth, and good governance (Coxon & Baba, 2003; Tarabini, 2010). This research project seeks to explore the influence of donors and international policies on the Samoan educational policy.

Development policy and international aid are examples of how international forces come to operate at a local level. Focusing on the dynamics of educational systems will provide a window through which it is possible to analyse how local priorities, and resources are influenced by international and regional development organisations (Kilby, 2011, 2013; Rappleye, 2011; Tolley, 2008).

The motivation for this research topic came from personal experiences of living and working in Samoa since 2009, and in these seven years, working with a non-formal educational programme for 12 to 15 year olds. Through my involvement with this programme I have been intimately involved in the life of many villages, schools and communities, and this has prompted my deeper consideration of the formal educational systems in Samoa. From my experiences working in Samoa, questions have arisen regarding the greater vision for education in Pacific countries as they are perceived and set by local agents. This research project seeks to analyse to what degree the international and regional language, priorities and interests direct the national education system of Samoa.

There is a great deal of international assistance directed to education, and nearly all aid comes with rigid requirements to receive it, followed by meticulous monitoring and evaluation to ensure the proper use of funds and that the goals of the funders are met (Tolley, 2008). Tolley (2008) explained the need to be wary

of drawing too heavily on international policies rather than local voices. The initial idea for this research was stimulated by the writing of Hillary Tolley and Evelyn Coxon about international education development policies and how these have come to play out in local settings in the Pacific. Seeking to represent the Pacific voices as much as possible in this research, the ideas of Konai Helu Thaman and Kabini Sanga are often used.

1.2. Significance and Rationale of the Research

This research project explores the interplay of global forces for shaping a small island's education system. There is general consensus among authors that a global agenda for education has emerged in the past two decades that has influenced donors and hence their recipients (Cassity, 2008; Coxon & Baba, 2003; Coxon & Munce, 2008; Coxon, 2002; Cremin & Nakabugo, 2012; King, 2007; Tarabini, 2010; Tolley, 2008). The emergence of this global agenda will be detailed in Chapter 2, in particular tracing the emergence of education becoming a primary means to achieving development. Education became not only an end in itself, but a means to increase the effectiveness of a work force to increase economic indicators, improve health and good governance– it became "education for development" (Coxon & Baba, 2003; King, McGrath, & Rose, 2007, p. 353; McGrath, 2010, p. 538; Mundy, 2006, p. 19, 2007, p. 346; Tarabini, 2010, p. 208; Tolley, 2008). Some of the results of the increased influence of a global agenda have been a more specific focus on primary enrolment and gender parity in school enrolment (King et al., 2007; Tolley, 2008). It is important to ensure that international practice, policy and trends do not overpower the local voices in development and education. Small nation states with very limited resources (such as the islands of the Pacific and Samoa) often rely on outside expertise, outside funding and even outside education systems to be able to provide for their educational needs.

In particular the 'Education for All' and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are significant points where the international community set out to create a common framework for monitoring progress in education (Unterhalter, 2014). These have been criticised as too reductionist and not responding to local

demands, but have been a tool that many development agencies and developing countries have utilised when setting their own priorities and goals (Clemens, Kenny, & Moss, 2007; Hayman, 2007; Unterhalter, 2014). They have also provided a monitorable framework that countries utilised to work towards internationally agreed goals, and receive international assistance.

1.3. Brief Introduction to Samoa

Samoa is located in the South Pacific region, with a population of just over 180,000, two main islands, a strong Christian faith, strong cultural practices (fa'asamoa) and a tropical climate. There is one city – the capital, Apia, which is a hub for business and higher education opportunities. One quarter of the population live below the basic needs line, facing hardships to provide basic necessities (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), 2014a, p. 3). The social structure of Samoa ensures that hunger is not a problem, villages and families provide a social security for those who are unable to provide for themselves. Samoa has a relatively strong formal education system, with more than 96% of primary aged children enrolled in formal schooling (UNESCO, 2015a) and an adult literacy rate of 99% (UNESCO, 2015b).

1.4. Research Aims, Questions and Approach

The aim of this research is to explore international development priorities in the Samoan education system.

My main research questions are:

- Do the priorities of the Samoan education policy correspond to international development goals?
- How have international development goals impacted donor involvement in education in Samoa?
- Does the global education agenda align with needs identified by Samoan educators?

The approach taken for this research project was informed by bottom-up and indigenous development theories. The approach of bottom-up development reflects the principles of development that I wish to promote, including:

empowerment, learning together, responsiveness and contextual groundedness (Parnwell, 2008). In this research project I seek to include indigenous Pacific authors on education, by placing value on indigenous knowledge I seek to follow an indigenous development approach (Briggs, 2008).

1.5. Methodology

This research project is based on a document analysis as the primary means of research, drawing on primary and secondary source material (O'Leary, 2010). The documents being analysed include peer reviewed journal articles, theses, reports and key documents from international and regional development agencies and websites, which represent a sample of the international forces in education for developing countries. Documents produced by the Samoan Government Ministries relating to education and young people which detail their aims, direction and vision will be analysed to compare the education priorities, use of resources and activities undertaken with international priorities.

This analysis will decipher trends, priorities and focus of the international agencies. These can then be compared with the national education policies of Samoa to see if they are similar to the donor policies. To explain the global and international agenda, this report will explore the priorities that are in donors' policies and their allocation of ODA. The document analysis aimed at bringing forward indigenous Pacific voices. This has been done by including academic articles, conference papers and books, authored by Pacific educators who discuss the needs of education in the Pacific (in chapter 3), and the national education policy of Samoa (chapter 4).

1.6. Ethics

As this research is based on a document analysis ethics approval is not necessary. However, sensitivity to the context and voices that are being portrayed in the research project must be paramount. Researchers must be cautious to not over-simplify a situation or story. International/regional/national relationships are complex and necessarily dynamic and evolving, as is any research attempting to understand these relationships. The principles of justice and beneficence as identified by Wall and Overton (2006) assist a researcher to reflect on who will

benefit from their research, and ensuring that there is justice means that the participants in the research must be the ones to benefit. The document analysis in this research project is therefore approached with a view to presenting a balanced account between indigenous Pacific education authors, international agencies and the national-level Samoan education perspective.

1.7. Research Project Outline

This research project first begins with a global perspective on development and education in Chapter 2, identifying some of the forces that have created an international agenda for education. The MDGs are highlighted for their role in bringing a focus on enrolment in primary education (Tolley, 2008).

Chapter 3 then takes the discussion to a regional level, that of the Pacific. This chapter first looks at the background to the provision of ODA to the Pacific, and then specifically to the Pacific for education. The perspective of Pacific educators and the initiatives and projects that have sought to improve education at a regional level are then described. Chapter 3 also contributes the ideas of some of the leading Pacific educators, who call for more culturally-sensitive approaches to education (Jourdan & Salaün, 2013; Puamau, 2006a; Thaman, 1990, 2001).

The context of Samoa is described in more detail in Chapter 4, along with more background information about the education system and the current status of education in Samoa. Chapter 5 analyses selected donors (Australia and New Zealand) and their inputs to education, their priorities and inputs to the Pacific and Samoa. This chapter then compares these priorities with the national education policy of Samoa to draw out evidence for the impact of global forces on the local education system. The final Chapter 6 is a discussion reflecting on the research aim and questions, and explores to what degree the international trends seem to be influencing Samoa's national policies.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW: "EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT"?

This chapter investigates how international development has prioritised education as both a goal and a means for economic development. It explores the influence of large international conferences on the setting of international education goals which have widely permeated the discourse of development. With increasing international consensus about priorities for education and the importance of education for development, the education policies of developing countries are subject to the demands of donor organisations. This chapter will begin to argue that there is a complex set of power relationships that education ministries must navigate, between national goals and priorities and the goals of international donors.

2.1. EMERGENCE OF A GLOBAL AGENDA FOR EDUCATION

Throughout the world international forces play out on local and national levels. Priorities are being set on an international level by development organisations and dominant countries. This then sets the agenda for national level activities. Coxon and Baba (2003) present the emergence of a global blueprint, placing more focus on the Pacific and tracing the blueprint from the modernisation eras of the 1950's and 60's, right through to the turn of the century with the rise of neo-liberal economic policies. The international financial institutions' implementation of structural adjustment programmes were the mechanism whereby neo-liberal economic policies were given precedence in development strategies (Coxon & Munce, 2008). The focus on education as a means for poverty reduction emerges from education being seen as an investment for raising productivity and economic growth (Coxon & Munce, 2008; Cremin & Nakabugo, 2012; Hayman, 2007; Tarabini, 2010). With the renewed focus on education as an investment for poverty reduction there has been agreement on goals and priorities at an international scale that seeks to "increase the level of education of the population as a whole and to increase its effectiveness as a means of reducing poverty" (Tarabini, 2010, p. 204). With a new global consensus around the aim of

development being to reduce poverty, education has become a primary strategy to achieve this (King & Rose, 2005). This international agreement on the role of education in development has also led to a global, shared understanding of the nature of education.

The process of globalisation set the context for the emergence of a global education agenda. The political and economic changes that came with globalisation have led "to an increase in the role of non-national agents in the definition of national priorities, strategies and policies" (Tarabini, 2010, p. 205). From the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, where article 26 espouses the right to free and compulsory elementary education, the right to education is considered fundamental to the exercise of all other human rights and often used as reasoning for ODA to education (Esteva & Prakash, 1998; United Nations, 2015; UNESCO, 2014a). Jones and Coleman (2005) and Mundy (1998) describe how the rights-based approach has developed after the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, with the formation of a specialised agency for education at the United Nations – the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). From a human-rights perspective, universal schooling and universal literacy is expounded, which in the later decades of the 20th Century became known as "Education For All" (Jones & Coleman, 2005). An increased focus and international consensus on the importance of recognising and respecting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an emphasis on democratisation and good governance and the need for gender equity all have in common the pivotal role of education (Habte, 1999). Education has the power to shape young minds and opinions, and the proven ability of education as a means to empower girls and young women (Nelson, 2003).

There has been a "global convergence of aid donor policies and procedures over the past fifteen years" not only in general development, but also in the area of education (Coxon & Munce, 2008, p. 148). Modernisation theories of the 1950s and 60s were rejuvenated in the 1990s with an increased focus on development being achieved by a greater integration into the global economy (Coxon & Munce, 2008; Tarabini, 2010). The globalisation and economic growth that was achieved in last few decades of the twentieth century was greater than ever experienced, and yet led to greater poverty as the gap between the poor and wealthy also grew astronomically (Escobar, 1992; Murray & Overton, 2011; Tarabini, 2010). The

necessity to find ways to tackle poverty, other than economic means, made education an even more attractive strategy to effectively reduce poverty – as it is a people-centred approach to development that is also expected to have economic benefits in the long-term. As Tarabini states (2010, p. 205), "it [education] has become the preferred mechanism to rethink the development strategies and practices". That the stated goals of development were not achieved in the twentieth century despite massive amounts of aid and assistance being distributed, led to the conclusion that much of that assistance was misguided (Escobar, 1992; Esteva & Prakash, 1998; Murray & Overton, 2011; van Peer, 2012).

These development paradigms: economic development theories of modernisation, neo-liberalism and human capital theory; as well as human-rights approaches to development, reinforce education as a primary goal and means for development. The goals of economic development and independence from aid are vigorously pursued to have countries achieve sustainable economic development. International trade patterns and agreements often serve to reinforce uneven power distributions between large economic powers and smaller countries – such as Samoa (Cahill, 2008; Larmour, 2002; McGregor, 2009).

2.1.1. International Development and Education

Much of the literature about education and development draws heavily on human capital theory (Coxon & Baba, 2003; Coxon, 2002; Cremin & Nakabugo, 2012; King, 2007; Maitra & Mukhopadhyay, 2012; Tarabini, 2010). This theory presents education as a means to economically advance a country or state and reduce poverty by developing 'human capital' through education. Education enhances the capabilities of the work force, which creates a more skilled labour pool and in turn contributes to production effectiveness and business development, which contributes to the financial market. Once it was commonly accepted that education could enhance national development, education began to be a significant benefactor of aid, receiving between 5 and 10% of the total flow of aid (Mundy, 2006, p. 15).

The consensus between donors about international priorities and practice has

led to an unprecedented state of international direction for the area of education. The call for education for development comes from both heads of state and international financial institutions; it has become a focus of international advocacy groups, created a development ground for new modes of delivery to be tested, changing donor-recipient relationships and receives significant amounts of aid money (Mundy, 2006, p. 14). Education has become a prominent strategy for development, and an area of development in itself (Tolley, 2008). With the rapid globalisation of markets and rise of capitalist strategies to achieve development goals, education has been given a key role in development (Coxon & Munce, 2008). An era of "education for development" was ushered in, providing the context for education to be prioritised in the formulation of international goals for development (Coxon & Munce, 2008; Mundy, 2006, p. 19; Tolley, 2008).

2.1.2. Millennium Development Goals and Education for All Goals

The rapid globalisation that occurred within development in the 1990s through a series of international conferences saw a shift in the understanding of what development is, and how it relates to education (Tolley, 2008). Following the changes in the development paradigm from modernisation to neo-liberalisation and human-rights approaches, there was an increased international consensus on the need to tackle the increasing poverty facing much of the world (Coxon & Munce, 2008; Cremin & Nakabugo, 2012; Hayman, 2007; Tarabini, 2010). The 1990 World Conference on Education For All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand, was jointly sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank. At this conference the *World Declaration on Education For All* was agreed upon with an accompanying *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* (Secretariat of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 1990). The importance and role of education was cemented with the "Education for All" summit and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which framed education as a priority and main strategy for development (King, 2007; Tarabini, 2010).

The multilateral agencies that called the conference were also the main drafting personnel for the Declaration and Framework. The role of developing nations'

governments, researchers and NGOs in affecting the content was minor, and their participation at the conference was taken as confirmation that the agenda set at the Conference was commonly shared, when in fact it has been argued that in reality there were many divergent views (King, 2007). The significant focus of the conference was on 'basic education' or 'basic learning needs', inclusive terms that embraced early childhood education, primary schooling, adult literacy, essential skills for youth and adults and access to knowledge and skills via the mass media (King, 2007, p. 379; Secretariat of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 1990).

Once the international consensus on the ethical and economic necessity of education was reached, and related goals set, then came monitoring and reporting to analyse the progress of each country towards these goals, including an increased intervention of donors (Jourdan & Salaün, 2013). The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published *Shaping the 21st Century: The contribution of Development Cooperation* (DAC, 1996), at approximately the mid-point of the 1990 EFA goals. This document included six International Development Targets (IDTs) with two out of six goals being specifically related to education: universal primary education by 2015 and reducing gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 (DAC, 1996). There was a broader understanding of basic education in the original documents of the EFA conference, which embraced a variety of different educational priorities, such as primary, secondary, technical and vocational training, teacher education, gender balance and so on (Secretariat of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 1990). Following the international goals, there was an effort to coordinate donor activity towards achieving the goals, and hence a focused effort began in these two specific areas of education. In the international development goals that emerged from EFA conferences, basic education become equated with primary education, whereas initially basic education was understood more as achieving a basic level of literacy and numeracy for all ages (Tarabini, 2010, King, 2007).

King (2007) and Tarabini (2010) describe how some of those present at the EFA conferences (such as the World Bank) made it clear at the time that they would continue to pursue strategies to increase primary school attendance, rather than the much more challenging task of attempting to embrace all of the different

elements of basic education in the original vision. Measurement of net enrolment rates was a much more appealing benchmark for donor organisations, as it is significantly easier to be able to monitor and evaluate with an acceptable level of accuracy. It is this narrowing of an education agenda that is explored through the analysis of the international assistance provided to Samoa for education, to understand whose definition and priority such assistance conforms to.

When analysing the emergence of the global education agenda, it is possible to see how international monetary institutions, particularly the World Bank, have played significant roles in the rise of education being seen as a primary strategy to reduce poverty. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) of the World Bank were one mechanism where governments were assisted to identify and analyse their own needs and design coherent national policies for development to achieve them. Tolley (2008) explained that these PRSPs have been criticised as creating a consensus (even when there is not one), favouring liberalisation and drawing together development education planning with development expenditure—often with the result of prioritising resources for primary education targets. Tarabini (2010) describes the World Bank as the main actor in setting the agenda for educational development. Coxon and Baba (2003) designate the World Bank as being the largest funder of education in the world, having the power and capacity to set a global agenda for development. The World Bank is utilising education (particularly basic education) as a main strategy for development as well as a stated goal of development (Coxon & Baba, 2003; King, 2007; Tarabini, 2010).

The World Education Forum in Dakar, 2000, and the resulting Dakar framework, set education within a broader development framework, and solidified international goals for education (UNESCO, 2000). The EFA goals that were agreed upon at the World Education Forum, are summarised as follows (UNESCO, 2000, p. 8):

> Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education;

> Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;

Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;

Goal 4: Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015;

Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015;

Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all.

The governments and organisations at the conference saw the importance of placing education within broader development processes and emphasised the centrality of education to achieving other development goals, including those related to: health, environment, labour movement, and economic growth, which was often equated with poverty reduction (Tarabini, 2010). This broader development framework was solidified later in the year with the establishment of the MDGs at the Millennium Summit.

At the Millennium Summit in the year 2000, international goals were agreed upon which summarised targets to be achieved in all areas of development, including education (Cassity, 2008; King, 2007; Mundy, 2006; Tarabini, 2010). The MDGs were the result of what was at the time the largest gathering of world leaders, and as they set the stage for development not as an issue of poor nations alone, but of the whole world, the MDGs tasked leaders to work together to achieve these development goals (Tarabini, 2010; Unterhalter, 2014). The role of education in development was cemented in these goals, which followed on from the focus and direction of the last decade, in particular the EFA goals. The second MDG was set as provision of a complete course of primary education, and monitored by enrolment rates (King & Rose, 2005; King, 2007; Tarabini, 2010). The MDGs are criticised as being reductionist and simplistic for very complex issues (Clemens et al., 2007; Cremin & Nakabugo, 2012; Hayman, 2007; Tarabini, 2010). The broad definitions for education that were embraced in the early 1990s have been completely replaced with a much more specific view of primary education as the priority and focus of interventions for development agencies. The indicator for

measuring progress towards this goal was the net enrolment rate, which further meant that completion of primary education was lost as a priority or goal (until an indicator was added in 2007 for proportion of pupils starting grade 1 completing grade 5), and enrolment in primary education became the target for education in development (Baulch, 2006; Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2009; Tarabini, 2010). It was expected that countries would create their own more complex educational goals and plans, but with the EFA and MDG 2 goals, the funding for education in developing countries was given a clear direction.

The concept of 'Education for All' in itself speaks to the emergence of an ideological convergence that occurred at an international level, at least between some key agencies. The set of international development goals and targets that was developed reflected a consensus on the need for basic education provision and drew the major donor agencies closer together with education as a means for development. The Millennium Summit has also been criticised as a forum whereby a few strong development actors were able to broaden their influence (King & Rose, 2005). The World Bank in particular, has been identified as an actor that narrowed the vision of basic education to just primary education to better suit their own purposes for economic development goals and ease of monitoring (King, 2007; Tarabini, 2010). These international gatherings for education in development further deepened the belief that education was an essential means for poverty reduction, to achieve the goals of development. The era of international goals and targets was ushered in, with education as a primary strategy for development, and hence an increase in the delivery of educational aid.

2.1.3. Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals

As the MDGs set their target for the year 2015, there has been much discussion as to what will follow on from these international development goals. There was a sense from the Pacific that the post-2015 agenda needed to provide a much higher level of ownership and responsibility to the people of the Pacific (McCormick, 2014; Sheridan et al., 2014). This is expressed in a quote from Pacific conference representatives from consultation on a post-2015 development agenda (quoted in McCormick, 2014, p. 173):

"Pacific delegates want to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda is a process that allows us to take ownership of our drama as custodians of the world's largest ocean"

Green, Hale and Lockwood (2012) argue that the very different realities of the 1990's (from which emerged the MDGs) to the teens of the new millennium call for a different approach to setting a post-2015 agenda. They suggest that limiting the discussion to the setting of a new set of goals would be a mistake, but rather more focus is needed into the changing of expected social norms, influencing government decision making and more involvement of civil society. Faul (2014, p. 20) describes how the UN member states are in a process of "defining new global 'Sustainable Development' goals, which include education as a policy priority across environmental, social, and economic development agendas". Faul (2014) and Unterhalter (2014) further describe how the post-2015 focus on educational quality is likely to be limited to measureable outcomes such as literacy and numeracy, rather than a broader policy that fosters child-learning centred approaches. There has been a call for a more human development focus for the post-2015 goals that are less reductionist than the MDGs (Burnett & Felsman, 2014; McGrath, 2014).

2.2. Educational Aid delivery

The delivery of aid to education has continued to be a significant influencing factor on education policies. Multi-lateral approaches became much more common, with the framework of the MDGs and EFA goals as guiding points of reference for donor assistance, and education was the common area of interest (Coxon, Tolley, Johansson Fua, & Nabobo-Baba, 2011; Tolley, 2011). Bi-lateral aid is still common, especially with some of the newer donors such as China and the European Union (Coxon & Cassity, 2011). A factor of considerable importance is the relationship between donors and the recipients (Coxon & Cassity, 2011; Fox, 2011; Shah, 2011). The globally accepted 'best practice' includes developing partnerships between the parties involved, although this often is more rhetoric than true partnership as the balance of power is unequal (Coxon & Cassity, 2011). It is the refusal of key actors to deal with the significant issue of inequality that can be identified as the reason for the failure of the world to make progress towards meeting international goals (Tarabini, 2010). There is a lack of

convergence between the priorities of donors and those of recipients, which will be analysed in the next few sections.

2.2.1. DONOR PRIORITIES AND APPROACH

Three of the most influential donors in the Pacific are the New Zealand, Australia and the European Union (Tolley, 2008). All three of these donors have increased their collaboration and are moving towards utilising multilateral aid, rather than bilateral aid of the past. They are supporting regional initiatives for education, and in particular sector-wide approaches (SWAp), which seek to engage the various actors involved in development (Coxon et al., 2011; Tolley, 2011). Donors are increasingly emphasising the need for institutional strength and good governance as requisites for receiving assistance. The role of civil society is being emphasised by donors and academics, and donors are attempting to create partnerships with the recipients (Habte, 1999). The major multi-lateral donors, as well as the bi-lateral donors, have an increased ideological convergence with the international goals and standards which appeal to both the donors with a focus on human rights as well as those who see education as a means to increase the productivity of the work force (Coxon & Baba, 2003; Sanga, 2005; Tolley, 2008). The donor approach is now most commonly described as a 'partnership approach' (see for example: Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), 2007; Ministry of Education Sports and Culture (MESC), 2006; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) Aid Programme, 2012), and it is with a partnership approach that overseas development assistance is now being delivered. With an understanding of the approach taken by donors, it is important to look at the needs that have been identified by aid recipients.

2.2.2. THE NEEDS OF RECIPIENTS OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The diverse contexts and cultural realities of the countries who are receiving educational aid from donor sources must be taken into account. The needs of these countries are primarily being measured according to a set of international goals such as 'Education for All' and the MDGs (MESC, 2007). The international standards of best practice affect the allocation of aid and the manner in which aid is delivered, often paying insufficient attention to regional or national needs

(Coxon & Munce, 2008). Indigenous knowledge systems have a vital role in education that is empowering and appropriate for the population (Coxon & Munce, 2008). Unfortunately Pacific Island countries (and most developing states) are controlled financially from outside, leading to education strategies and priorities that are often "one size fits all" models (Jourdan & Salaün, 2013).

That countries must set their own goals that reflect shared understandings, commitments and values, irrespective of the pressure of donors, is essential (King & Rose, 2005). The creation of national systems of education must pay attention to the needs of the population and the reality of the area. The recipient countries often lack the resources necessary to be able to effectively identify the educational needs to a level that is acceptable for international reporting and monitoring standards (Asia Development Bank and the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, 2008). However, recipient countries and academics from these countries are increasingly able to analyse their own situation and express what they see their needs being, but too often these are not listened to (see authors such as Baba, 1999; Nabobo-baba, 2006; Puamau, 2005, 2006a; Taufe'ulungaki, 2001).

2.2.3. Donor-Recipient Relationships: Partnership?

The literature on the effectiveness of aid conditionality and dependency on foreign aid is much discussed (see for example: Brown, 2009; Cahill, 2008; Campbell, 1992; Chutaro & Heine, 2004; Larmour, 2002). The majority of the literature reviewed describes the ineffectiveness of placing conditions on aid (Larmour, 2002). Campbell (1992) paints a compelling argument for a Pacific country's *in*dependence from foreign aid, not denying that states have a significant amount of aid being inserted, but rather indicating that they would not drastically suffer were this situation to end. Jourdan & Salaün (2013, p. 208) describe how the "'dependency of the 'independent' countries is associated with a homogenization of reforms imposed (through conditional financing) by donor countries and agencies." It is a directive set of policies emerging from the international development agencies that is creating true dependency, deeper than the financial conditionality that is often attached with aid. It is important to analyse the relationships between "partner" agencies in current and past development settings in the Pacific.

The rich discussion around the idea of "partnership" that exists within development discourse, has many authors suggesting that partnership is more of a rhetoric being widely touted – but not implemented (Coxon & Cassity, 2011; Fox, 2011; Tolley, 2011). There is an emerging amount of literature on the partnership and power relationships that exist between Pacific nations and the larger development players in the region (World Bank, Asia Development Bank, NZ Aid, AusAID and so on). Many researchers have identified that there are unequal power relationships between these two parties, and that there needs to be more reflection and consideration on the nature of a partnership (Coxon & Cassity, 2011; Coxon & Munce, 2008; Fox, 2011; Tolley, 2011).

The nature of power relationships in the Pacific development context is an area of interest for academics and practitioners. Tolley (2011) analyses power in the context of these so-called partnerships in the Pacific, in particular between New Zealand and the Ministries of Education in Tonga and the Solomon Islands (see also: Coxon et al., 2011). She raises the point that power and partnerships are never neutral, and goes on to ask the question of whose interests these partnerships were serving. Fox (2011, p. 24) picks up on this same theme also in the Pacific, she talks of the "rhetoric of shared visions" and does a critical analysis of the partnerships being forged in aid relationships, drawing particularly on experiences in Samoa. With large international organisations, historical relationships of colonialism, significant sums of money, political considerations and geographical realities all at play in the Pacific development setting, there is a need to attempt to understand the many complex and interrelated forces exerting power.

2.3. CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has explored the literature that has described the emergence of a global education agenda. Development paradigms including modernisation and neo-liberal economics, human capital theory and rights-based approaches, have all reinforced the role of education in development, leading to the emergence of an 'education for development' approach. The essential role of education in development was well established prior to the international conferences that saw goals and targets being established. The convergence of the aims of some large donor organisations which led to the formation of international goals for

education and development was an important point in the emergence of a global agenda for education. The EFA goals and MDG 2 became guidelines for countries and organisations working in development, to focus their interventions on these selected areas, and monitor the impact towards achieving the targets set for the goals. More recently, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emerged as the time frame of the MDGs draws to a close (hence 'post-2015'). These SDGs are attempting to have a greater emphasis on human development factors, including a broader education agenda. The relationship between donors and recipients continues to evolve, as they are now attempting to enter into partnerships. This can create some difficulties as the relationships have emerged from historical situations and the financial reality leads to an imbalanced power balance.

Chapter 3: Overseas Development Assistance for Education in the Pacific

The international assistance provided to the Pacific in the area of education is seen to reinforce many of the diverse aims of development. It is generally agreed by development partners that other aims of development, including economic growth, social stability and good governance, are all enhanced or achieved through inputs to education in the community sector, and formal schooling. In particular, the international focus on achieving MDG 2 has lent impetus to education receiving significant amounts of aid. Chapter 2 described the emergence of a global agenda for education. This agenda has been encapsulated in the MDG and EFA goals which often serve as simplified guidelines for the efforts of donor agencies, which will be discussed in this chapter.

The third research question of this project is about the alignment of an international education agenda with Samoan priorities. This chapter describes educational aid in the Pacific context, exploring overseas development assistance that is provided to the Pacific region, the reasons behind such assistance and the main donors. It then explores some regional education initiatives that have been implemented in the Pacific (Chapters 4 and 5 will explore this in more detail in relation to Samoa). This chapter will also seek to explore some of the academic writing of Pacific Island indigenous educators, their views on education and the role of ODA. The ideas presented by these local writers will then lead to a brief summary of some alternative education ideas and practices in the Pacific.

3.1. The Pacific and Overseas Development Assistance

International assistance to the Pacific is nothing new, educational aid to the Pacific is similarly not a new phenomenon. Since the first missionaries came to the Pacific Islands and brought with them the Western construct of schooling and education, one could say that international assistance has been provided to the Pacific for education. Sanga (2005) identifies three broad justifications for aid to

education. The first of these is that it is historical – histories of colonisation and more modern constitutional arrangements create relationships that generally consist of one party providing the majority of material means to the education system. Colonial historical relationships such as Tokelau with New Zealand, or the Marshall Islands with the United States, create situations where a donor country is responsible for providing the majority of the education budget for the recipient country (Coxon, 2002; Sanga, 2005). The school systems in these countries often mirror the school system in the donor country, creating a gap between the cultural needs for education and what the system provides. International assistance can lead to the key decisions being made by donors as they are the controlling agency for the majority of the education budget.

The second reason Sanga (2005) identifies for educational aid to be provided is on the basis of need. In conflict situations or after natural disasters often countries will need international assistance to get their education system functioning well again. Similar to this line of reasoning is a more modern view of international assistance being provided to alleviate poverty, as a social responsibility from the wealthier countries to those with high levels of poverty. This line of reasoning does not have economic growth as a priority for the distribution of aid, but rather aims to draw on sustainable models of human development (Cremin & Nakabugo, 2012; Sanga, 2005). Providing educational aid on the basis of need also draws on rights-based development models which try to present more holistic views of development. Education is one of the original key indicators of the Human Development Index (Cremin & Nakabugo, 2012). In the post-2015 development agenda McGrath (2014) analyses the place of education, the complicated nature of development itself makes the interaction with education more complex. He describes the move away from economic growth as the overarching goal of development, and how education has often been given an instrumental role: "seeing education as a means towards greater goals such as gender equality, population control and democracy" (McGrath, 2014, p. 6).

The third reason that Sanga identifies for ODA to the Pacific is that "educational aid to the FPICs [Forum Pacific Island Countries] is big business" (Sanga, 2005, p. 17, Sanga, 2003). The total amount of aid to the Pacific Islands in 2013 was more than US $1,761 million (OECD, 2015a). The projects, ongoing activities and

organisations that depend on aid money for their existence and ongoing operational costs are many and varied, and there is no sign of this decreasing. Aid specifically for education in the Pacific region was more than US $304 million in the year 2013 (OECD, 2015b).

Pacific Island population distributions have been another contributing factor to the significance of educational aid in the region. More than 1.5 million youth aged between 15 and 24 years of age are living in Pacific Island countries (Coxon & Munce, 2008, p.151), and another 27% of the population are in the age range of 1 to 14 years (Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Quality (SPBEQ), 2014). A disproportionately lower number of jobs and opportunities are available for this population, leading to high levels of unemployment (Coxon & Munce, 2008; SPBEQ, 2014). An increase in poverty levels can lead to youth being over-represented in high-risk behaviours and this has been attributed as a cause of increasing lawlessness and instability in many developing states (Coxon & Munce, 2008). Coxon and Munce (2008) use UNDP sources to show how the lack of viable educational pathways for employment or further education are contributing factors to the dissatisfaction of young people, sometimes resulting in migration in search of more opportunities and internal social problems.

Regional development organisations in the Pacific have recognised that economic policies have continued to exclude the potential contribution of young people, in particular those from rural areas (SPBEQ, 2014, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), 2009). In education, youth are the primary targets for secondary and tertiary education programmes, the shortcomings of an education system are felt most keenly by this population and subsequently young people often take out their frustrations on their communities (Sanga, 2005). Interventions for education are often in response to the needs of young people – leaders in the Pacific have concerns about the provision of education to young people in the Pacific, and have attempted to develop frameworks to address these (see sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4).

Despite more than 30 years of heavy investment in education by donors to the Pacific, educational outputs were still looking very dismal in the year 2000 (Taufe'ulungaki, 2014). More recent research that set out to establish a baseline set of data for the levels of literacy and numeracy in the Pacific has similarly

shown concerning results. The Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) study indicated that more than 70% of students were not able to achieve basic literacy results and more than 50% were not able to achieve basic numeracy skills (Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), 2012, p. 10). ODA for education in the Pacific, for the majority of the last three decades of the Twentieth Century, was mostly made up of bilateral aid that went towards tertiary scholarships, creating an elite group of overseas educated Pacific Islanders who were often put in leadership capacities upon return from education abroad (Cassity, 2008; Luteru & Teasdale, 1993; Mundy, 2006; Tolley, 2008; Tomasevski, 2004). From this environment, a group of education academics has emerged with a critical analysis of educational aid and have lent their voices to creating a Pacific perspective for the future of education. The last fifteen years has seen an emergence of initiatives and discourse about educational aid in the Pacific, some of which are looked at in more detail in section 3.2.

3.2. Voices from the Pacific: An Indigenous Education Agenda?

Global forces created an international agenda for education, which proliferated throughout the world through internationally agreed upon goals, as discussed in Chapter 2. These goals have brought increased focus to achieving human development by reducing poverty and measuring results, while they have been criticised for their reductionist approach that does not allow for the local context or the interwoven nature of all aspects of society (Cremin & Nakabugo, 2012; McGrath, 2014). Academics indigenous to the Pacific region have not been silent in the conversations about educational aid, or the broader fields of education and development generally. A number of key authors have emerged that have provided new approaches for operating within this 'education for development' framework (detailed in section 3.2.1). Skilfully navigating the necessity of incorporating local and global ideas into a coherent educational framework that is distinctly Pacific in nature, these authors have brought to the fore a 'Pacific voice' for education in the development context of the Pacific Islands.

When Pacific educators are consulted about the needs they identify in their own

countries, they clearly articulate the need for local cultural references to be included, while also providing the education necessary to succeed in an increasingly global world (Jourdan & Salaün, 2013). Pacific indigenous academics do not see a conflict or choice to be made between 'traditional' knowledge systems and 'modern' knowledge systems, but rather a complementary relationship that is able to foster the growth of young people (Fasi, 2002; Puamau, 2005). Nurturing the potential of the younger generation to be able to contribute to their communities, countries, families and collective futures is a noble goal of an educational system, and the holistic worldview held by the people of the Pacific reinforces this objective. A definition of 'basic education' from a senior Pacific education expert, Dr. 'Ana Taufe'ulungaki, is "lifelong learning of essential values, knowledge and life skills needed for survival and the development of communities" (quoted in Coxon & Munce, 2008).

3.2.1. PACIFIC CONCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION

One of the leading Pacific educational theorists is Professor Konai Helu Thaman, who has written extensively on the importance and "need to develop a more culturally sensitive model of curriculum development as well as more culturally democratic curricula" (Thaman, 1999, p. 16). Thaman (1990, 2009) has articulated a framework for conceptualising education from a Pacific Islander's perspective (Tongan): that is the *Kakala* framework. This has been cited frequently by other authors (see: Johansson Fua, 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2006; Smith, 2011; Vaka'uta & Koya, 2014), and has informed the development of similar Pacific educational frameworks from Fiji, the Cook Islands and Tonga (Johansson Fua, 2014). *Kakala* is "a framework for understanding Pacific learning and learners", valuing relationships, qualities and cultural context (Thaman, 2009, p. 6). It is a holistic educational concept that embraces both the traditional knowledge and modern educational concepts in a way that is accessible and centred in the reality of Pacific Island societies.

Although education is often equated with formal schooling, it is much broader than this limiting description. Thaman (2002, p. 25) describes the need for education to reflect Pacific cultures, as all educational content "has value underpinnings that are always associated with a particular cultural agenda as there is no such thing as culture-free education." Taufe'ulungaki (2002, p. 15)

states that "the failure of education in the Pacific can be attributed in large measure to the imposition of an alien system designed for western social and cultural contexts, which are underpinned by quite different values." Similarly, Afamasaga (2002, p. 97) describes schooling in Samoa and the Pacific as "a totally foreign import, and thus an alienating force". These authors have in common the need to have culturally relevant education, which centre Pacific cultural values in any education system.

Thaman (2009) describes the mismatch, and sometimes conflict, that occurs between the value systems of Pacific indigenous education systems and imported western systems. She states:

> *"the values that are emphasised and used by most people to explain their own and others' behaviour include emphases on the supernatural, rank and authority, kinship relationships, concrete and specific contexts, and restraint behaviour.   The western academic tradition generally emphasises secularism, equality, individuality, universalism and criticism."*

<div align="right">(Thaman, 2009, p. 4)</div>

This is further explained in relation to teaching and learning behaviours by Taufe'ulungaki (2009, p. 15), she describes the thinking of Pacific Islanders as having characteristics such as:

- *creative, holistic and spatial;*
- *divergent instead of linear logical;*
- *interpersonal, which favours group activities, spoken over written language, and demonstration and doing rather than verbal direction;*
- *and kinesthetic, which lends itself to physical activities.*

Sanga (2002) explains the mismatch between in-school and out-of-school education in the Pacific. He outlines how the value systems of the west are transmitted through schooling, which is often the opposite of the education received out-of-school – this includes concepts of time, competition, status and community engagement.

The need for consideration on aspects of language (particularly the use of the

vernacular), the need to have clearly understood and defined goals for education that have emerged from the Pacific, and the need to have a holistic and life-long learning approach to education that embraces much more than just schooling – these are all issues that have been raised by Pacific Island writers (Afamasaga, 2002; Nabobo, 2002; Puamau, 2005; Sanga, 2002; Taufe'ulungaki, 2002, 2009; Thaman, 2002).

The Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of basic Education (PRIDE) project and Re-thinking Initiative have both had the involvement of the same leading Pacific academics (Konai Helu Thaman, Se'ula Johansson Fua, 'Ana Maui Taufe'ulungaki, Kabini Sanga, 'Unaisi Nabobo-Baba and more), as such, the literature on the Pacific concepts of education have often been linked with these initiatives (the book "Tree of Opportunity", 2002, for example).

3.2.2. THE RE-THINKING PACIFIC EDUCATION INITIATIVE BY PACIFIC PEOPLES FOR PACIFIC PEOPLES

The "Re-Thinking Pacific Education Initiative by Pacific Peoples for Pacific Peoples" (RPEIPP), pronounced "REAP", was a development strategy implemented in 2001 by some key Pacific educators in partnership with the New Zealand Aid Programme (van Peer & Abella, 2014, p. 16). This initiative has been described as a "discourse" (Vaka'uta & Koya, 2014, p. 36), an "approach" (van Peer, 2012, p. 37), a "regional strategy" (Sanga, 2011, p. 7) and a later even a "movement" (Nabobo-Baba, 2012, p. 83; van Peer & Abella, 2014, p. 21). The RPEIPP "advocated culturally appropriate analysis of Pacific education systems and assists Pacific educationists to re-focus their planning on Pacific values and knowledge systems" (Thaman, 2014). Many outputs have come from the RPEIPP, including conferences, workshops, published books and academic articles (Chu, 2014; 'Ana Maui Taufe'ulungaki, 2014; van Peer & Abella, 2014; van Peer, 2012). Those who have been involved have noted changes in their teaching and learning styles, particularly at the level of teacher education which was one of the focus points of the initiative (see for example: Chu, 2014; Heine & Emeisochi, 2014; 'Ana Maui Taufe'ulungaki, 2014; Thaman, 2001, 2005; van Peer & Abella, 2014).

Taufe'ulungaki (2014, p. 6) described the Re-Thinking Initiative as "an attempt to

re-examine Pacific education, using the advantage of the experiences and perceptions of Pacific insiders, who had successfully integrated both worlds, Pacific and West". The metaphor of a "Tree of Opportunity" was introduced to "encapsulate the new vision for Pacific education based on the assumption that the main purpose of education in the Pacific is the survival, transformation and sustainability of Pacific peoples and societies" (Pene, Taufe'ulungaki, & Benson, 2002, p. 3). Furthermore, "education, or the Tree of Opportunity, is firmly rooted in the cultures of Pacific societies" (Pene et al., 2002, p. 3). This metaphor is used to describe the interaction of western ideologies with those of the Pacific, that they can be utilised and combined, but the 'roots' of the tree are in the actual Pacific cultures.

The RPEIPP has explicitly discussed, analysed and brought to the fore the interplay between global and local forces (Pene et al., 2002; Thaman, 2014). This interplay between local and global is at the centre of my research aims – to explore the influence of these global forces in the field of education in developing countries, specifically that of Samoa. The RPEIPP literature has contributed greatly to the documentation of Pacific cultural frameworks for education. The initiative has created new ways of interacting with donors, generated relevant research to contribute to the field of Pacific educational ideas, mentored a generation of students and academics in a new way of viewing educational ideas and impacted country-level planning for education (Chu, 2014; Taufe'ulungaki, 2014; Vaka'uta & Koya, 2014; van Peer & Abella, 2014; van Peer, 2012). The effectiveness of regionalisation as a means to draw on collective values and skills has been demonstrated by the RPEIPP. The methods utilised by the RPEIPP came from the Pacific educators that the initiative was targeting; this approach was effective and well-received, built closer relationships and established ownership for the ideas generated and processes used (Sanga, 2011; van Peer, 2012, Puamau, 2006).

3.2.3. The Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of (basic) Education

Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of (basic) Education (PRIDE), was one of the outcomes of the RPEIPP which was supported by outside funders (New Zealand and the European Union) to the value of NZ$21 million (Sanga, 2003, p.

29). Pacific leaders were the initiators of PRIDE, were the ones directing its priorities, and the initiative was understood as an ongoing "organic" process, rather than conceived as a 'project' (Sanga, 2003, p. 31, 36, 38, 2011; Tolley, 2008).

The PRIDE ran from 2001 to 2010 as a regional strategy to implement the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) that had emerged out of the Pacific Island Forum Education Ministers Meeting (FEdMM) in 2001 (Tagivakatini & Hau'ofa, 2010; Tavola, 2010). The PRIDE had many diverse aims embracing all areas of education. One key area was in the development of strategic plans for education which emerged out of a broad base of consultation with the stakeholders in each country (Tagivakatini & Hau'ofa, 2010). The support offered for the strategic planning attempted to "provide a 'Pacific epistemology' to the process of educational planning" (Hind, 2010, p. 362). The many diverse sub-projects, conferences, workshops and activities that came under the PRIDE drew on a distinctly Pacific way of operating, including: networking, relationship building, sharing best practice, collaboration with regional education stakeholders and an "associated sense of ownership and familial kinship" (Puamau, 2010, p. 32; Tagivakatini & Hau'ofa, 2010). It is these elements that were the mode of operation for the PRIDE, and have been emphasised as some of the key lessons learnt from the experience with the PRIDE (Hind, 2010; Puamau, 2010; Tagivakatini & Hau'ofa, 2010). The success from the PRIDE reinforces the effectiveness of regionally focused activities and demonstrates positive results from putting education reform and advice in the hands of Pacific experts.

The interaction of global and local forces in this initiative can be discerned through the involvement of the donors, international consultants, and Pacific education specialists working in the countries that were involved. It has been said by some who were involved in the PRIDE (Coxon & Munce, 2008, pp. 157–8) that the original goal of the FBEAP to "provide opportunities for Pacific youth to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that would enable them to participate in the social, spiritual, economic and cultural development of their communities as individuals, community members and citizens", was significantly distorted by the donor partners, leading ultimately to a project that was more focused on strategic planning (which was of priority to donors) than Pacific youth. The interplay of relationships between donors and recipients can be seen

here, with the power held entirely by one party through the financial control, if it were not for the 'partnership' with donors, the project would not have existed in any form.

3.2.4. THE PACIFIC EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

There has been a parallel process at the political level coinciding and interweaving with the activities of the PRIDE and the RPEIPP. The Pacific Islands Ministers of Finance meeting in 1999, made a recommendation that the Ministers for Education of the region gather together and take stock of the current dire situation of education in the region. It was recognised that any long term economic gains must rest on a strong foundation of education for the young people of the Pacific (PIFS, 2009).

The first gathering of the Ministers of Education took place in May 2001, in Auckland, New Zealand. The evidence that these Ministers were presented with showed the failing state of education in the region, leaving young people without adequate preparation for their futures. These Ministers focused on basic education as the "fundamental building block for society" (PIFS, 2014). The Forum Basic Education Action Plan 2001 (FBEAP) was endorsed by the Ministers, and updated in subsequent meetings (PIFS, 2014). This framework embraced the global education agenda explicitly in its adoption of the EFA goals and MDGs. Following this meeting of the Education Ministers in 2001, the PIFS sought funding to implement the FBEAP – from this the Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) was launched in 2004 (Tavola, 2010).

The Pacific Education Development Framework (2009) emerged from a thorough review of the implementation of FBEAP in the region in 2008. Another regional document for the development of the region, the Pacific Plan, was endorsed by the Pacific Islands Forum leaders in 2005, and it was felt that the review of FBEAP would contribute to the Pacific Plan (Sanga, 2011, p. 10). As a consequence, a framework was recast that would guide national Ministries in their work.

3.3. CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

Academics indigenous to the Pacific have questioned the imported ideals in Pacific education systems, and the role of donors in supporting education in the

Pacific. The Pacific has a long history of ODA, including educational assistance. Efforts such as the PRIDE and the RPEIPP have served to create a meaningful discussion to inform efforts of donors in Pacific education and create a more conscious deliberation around the future direction of education in the Pacific. This chapter has addressed the research aim of exploring international development priorities in the Pacific, by providing a context for the deeper analysis of this aim in Samoa. In the Pacific region, the international agenda has been felt by many to be imposing western ideas about education, often through donor involvement. The following chapter will investigate the situation in Samoa, education practices and how education in Samoa has been impacted by an international education agenda.

Chapter 4: Samoan Education Policy and Development

This chapter explores the Samoan Government policies related to education, in particular to analyse the involvement and influence of donors in these policies. A thorough exploration of key documents of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) provides an avenue to explore the impact of a global education agenda and international donors on policy formation in Samoa. An understanding of the context of Samoa is essential to understanding how certain trends influence education demands and particular development strategies are employed. It also enables us to reflect on the emergence of the current educational system from the particular cultural and historical setting of Samoa.

The previous chapters explored how a global agenda for education emerged and how this has impacted in the implementation of development strategies in the Pacific region. Through an attempt to understand the reality of education in Samoa, it is possible to investigate whether the global education agenda is having an effect on education policy and implementation. This chapter will first look at the development context of Samoa, then the system of education, and a brief discussion on what the purpose of education may be for Samoa. This is important because Chapter 5 will build on this context to show a comparison between donor agencies and the Samoan education priorities.

4.1. The Samoan Development Context

The context in which the analysis of the global education agenda is being explored is that of Samoa. This section will provide a brief outline of certain aspects of the geography, history, culture and economy that are particularly relevant to the discussion about Samoa's education, which will inform the analysis in Chapter 5.

Geographically, Samoa has ten islands—four of which are inhabited (Government of Samoa, 2014). There are two main islands, both volcanic and mountainous; Savaii and Upolu (Roebeck-Tuala, Lene, & Faasalaina, 2010). Savaii Island is the largest with an area of 1,700 square kilometres and Upolu has a land area of

1,110 square kilometres. Samoa's total land area is 2830 square kilometres (Stewart-Withers & O'Brien, 2006). Located only 14 degrees south of the equator, the climate is tropical, consisting of two seasons: the wet season and the dry season. Samoa is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and natural disasters, it has experienced a number of significant disasters (including tsunami and cyclones) in recent years at great cost both economically and in loss of life (Ministry of Women Community and Social Development (MWCSD), 2013). The city of Apia is the commercial hub and political capital, and the remaining settlements are rural village settings. The majority of the land is uncultivated forest (60%), with agricultural land making up another 12% (Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 2014; UNData, 2014).

It is generally agreed that the Samoan islands were settled around 3,000 years ago, with Polynesian migrants coming from South East Asia (Gough, 2006). They maintained their strong seafaring skills and exercised mobility in the region, interacting with neighbouring island groups, particularly Fiji and Tonga. From early contact with European whalers in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, Samoa began to have increasing contact with other parts of the world through missionaries and steamships (Gough, 2006). Two colonial powers have significantly influenced Samoa through the processes of formal colonisation; Germany and New Zealand respectively. Samoa gained their independence from New Zealand in 1962, being the first of the Pacific islands to achieve this status (Roebeck-Tuala et al., 2010). Prior to New Zealand colonial rule, Samoa was a territory of Germany from 1900 to 1914 (Murphy, 2013).

Fa'aSamoa refers to the cultural system in Samoa, and it embraces all elements of Samoan life; shared understandings, perspectives and values. As with any culture, Samoan culture continues to change, especially with more interaction with western cultures (Va'a, 2006). Samoan culture continues to be strong in migrant populations – even after having moved abroad many years earlier, families teach their children *fa'aSamoa* and maintain connections to their family in their home island through remittances and/or visits (Gough, 2006). *Fa'aSamoa* is a way of life that promotes reciprocity, respect and interconnectedness, it emphasises the well-being of the collective over the individual (MWCSD, 2013). It is generally described as having three main parts; the extended family ('*aiga*), the chiefs (*matai*) and the Church, but with many

other interacting features. In *fa'aSamoa* each member of society has a clearly delineated role and responsibility, and is expected to contribute to their family, village and Church (Stewart-Withers & O'Brien, 2006). Chiefly titles are bestowed through families and the village Council of Chiefs is still the main source of authority and justice in each village. *Matai* and Church pastors are the holders of power in the community, but this power is bestowed by the family. It is the interwoven and reciprocal nature of the relationships between these three that make up the central elements of *fa'aSamoa* (Thornton, Binns, & Kerslake, 2013).

Samoa is a Christian nation, with Methodist and Catholic being the largest denominations, and there are an increasing number of Samoans converting to new churches, such as Assembly of God, Seventh Day Adventist and Mormonism (Thornton et al., 2013). The Samoan motto is "Samoa is founded on God" (Samoa Tourism Authority, 2014), and the Church plays a very significant role in *fa'aSamoa* – the Samoan way of life. The strong Christian foundation in Samoan society is evident in all aspects of community life, including the education system, as an informal influence and formal schooling provider. It also forms the basis of how children are raised in Samoa, they are seen as a blessing and a responsibility from God, creating a protectiveness around children (MWCSD, 2013).

Economically, Samoa is a small island developing state located in the South Pacific, graduating in January 2014 from the status of a 'least developed country' to that of a 'developing country' (Australian Government DFAT, 2014a, p. 4; Ministry of Finance - Economic Policy and Planning Division, 2012). This status was extended because of the need to recover from the tsunami that hit the islands in 2009. The status has a direct impact on the country's ability to access international aid and low-interest loans, and consequently the involvement of donor agencies in national policy.

The system of government is a stable democracy, with a traditional Head of State, the Malietoa (Government of Samoa, 2014; MWCSD, 2013). This stability lends Samoa to being an appealing partner for donors. Samoa has ratified a number of international treaties including: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and is working towards ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities (MWCSD, 2013; Government of Samoa, 2001).

The islands of Samoa have a total population of 189,000, with more than 80% living in rural villages (UNData, 2014, n. p.). The population is of Polynesian ethnicity, and it is essentially a mono-cultural state with more than 92% of the population being Samoan (CIA, 2014, n. p.). The population in Samoa is noticeably young, with more than half the population under 24 years of age (CIA, 2014, n. p.), this youthful population places a significant demand on the educational system to create opportunities and ensure that youth are productively engaged. Samoan and English are the official languages (Roebeck-Tuala et al., 2010), although Samoan is the primary language of everyday communication with 91% of the population using Samoan as the means of communication at home (MWCSD, 2013). An analysis of the population of Samoa reveals the average life expectancy for men as 70 years, and for women it is 76 years of age (UNData, 2014, n. p.). Samoa has a consistently falling fertility rate, 2012 UNData (2014, n. p.) statistics have the fertility rate at an average of 4.2 children per mother. Unfortunately Samoa also has some of the highest rates of obesity and the related non-communicable diseases in the world (CIA, 2014). There are many initiatives and donor supported projects that are attempting to bring down the rate of non-communicable disease in Samoa, many of which utilise the school system as a delivery mechanism for their programmes.

Samoa is experiencing increasing urbanisation. Apia is the main city and has a population of 37,000 (UNData, 2014, n. p.). It is described as a collection of urban villages, because of the traditional villages that are embraced in the greater Apia area (Thornton et al., 2013). The movement of families to the city can result in a loss of kinship ties that reinforce *fa'aSamoa*, a loss of access to communal farming land, and food resources. There is concern for an increasing number of urban landless within the Samoan population (Thornton et al., 2013). This issue is deeply connected with *fa'aSamoa*, as sometimes families are trying to move away from responsibilities to family and Church that they find overburdening. On other occasions a dispute in a family about matters relating to land or titles, can lead to a forced or semi-forced move to urban areas. With a change in consumption patterns and increased reliance on remittances, there are changes in the population that can potentially undermine local production patterns. The Second World War was the first stimulus for a more cash-dependent economy. A

large amount of labour was needed for the American troops stationed in Samoa, and families began to desire the goods that became available, hence encouraging members of the family to seek paid employment (Gough, 2006).

Despite the differences between the rural and urban centres, there is significant mobility within the population which allows for young people to travel to urban centres for schooling. Savaii Island has approximately 24% of the population, with more than three quarters of the population living in Upolu (Murphy, 2013, p. 6). The sparse population of Savaii makes for challenges with the delivery of quality education.

Currently there are an estimated additional 200,000 Samoan-born Samoans living overseas (Gough, 2006), with major centres of population in New Zealand, Australia and America. The migration patterns of Samoans and the centres of population abroad play an extremely significant role in the county's economy. Net migration rates for the last 6 years have been between 12 and 16 thousand a year (UNData, 2014). The high rate of migration leads to a significant amount of private income transfers between family members living overseas, known as remittances. Remittances have had an increasingly important role in developing countries by increasing disposable income of recipient families, boosting economic growth and reducing poverty (Jayaraman, Choong, & Kumar, 2009). Personal remittances in the year 2012 to Samoa made up almost US $159 million, more than 23% of GDP (UNData, 2014). Samoa is heavily dependent on foreign aid, in the last five years this has increased from 7% GNI, or US $40 million, to more than US $120 million and 19% GNI in 2012 (UNData, 2014). Samoa also has considerable international loans that require regular repayments. Samoa is financially dependent to larger overseas economies, through family remittances, and international donors and monetary organisations, there are strong links to the global economy. With so much migration to English speaking countries, and the heavy reliance on remittances resulting from this migration, there is a noticeable demand for education to prepare a work force for deployment abroad.

The United Nations have identified several areas of concern in Samoa. Youth suicide is a well-known problem in Samoa (Stewart-Withers & O'Brien, 2006), other highlighted issues include alcohol misuse, teenage pregnancy, children with disabilities and unemployment (MWCSD, 2013). The rate of youth and children

offending in Samoa has considerably increased, and in 2004 the Young Offenders Act was implemented. Between the period of 2004 to 2010 the rate of young people (between the ages of 10 to 29) increased from 12.7% of the total offending population to 52%, most of whom were over the age of 18 (MWCSD, 2013). These are all pressing issues that are facing the young people of Samoa and any education system must take into consideration these needs.

4.2. Education in Samoa

The context of Samoa presents a particular environment for the education system to take root and develop, and for young people to access education. The needs of young people are one aspect of the needs of education to be considered. But at a deeper level is the consideration of the social structure, cultural reality, economic and development future of the country of Samoa and its peoples.

With such significant migration from Samoa to the neighbouring nations of New Zealand, Australia and the United States, education is a significant element in the interplay between nations. Teacher recruitment and development is impacted by the migration of qualified teachers overseas, as illustrated by a recent controversy that occurred when neighbouring American Samoa recruited a number of teachers from Samoa, much to the displeasure of the CEO of the Ministry of Education in Samoa (Radio NZ, 2014). Unfortunately this issue highlighted many concerns of teachers in Samoa, particularly related to remuneration. It is not uncommon to meet professional Samoan's working in fruit picking schemes abroad, the amount that can be earned in a few months labouring work is more than many yearly salaries of teachers. Neighbouring developed countries deplete the local professional human resources (by their utilisation of cheap Pacific Islands labour) to support agricultural production – from the very countries that they are funding to support the improvement of education.

The education that is being provided to the children and youth of Samoa directly impacts countries such as New Zealand and Australia. With such high rates of migration, there is an awareness by donor countries of the need to educate the future residents and citizens of these countries (Coxon, 2002; Sanga, 2005). Afamasaga (2002) even mentions having talks with the New Zealand aid agency

about getting support for their teacher training school because they are training so many teachers that migrate and work in the New Zealand school system.

Although Samoa is formally independent, similar to many other South Pacific nations, there is a strong sense that the education policies are primarily initiated from outside by international agencies and NGOs (Afamasaga, 2002; Coxon & Baba, 2003; Jourdan & Salaün, 2013; Sanga, 2005b; Taufe'ulungaki, 2002; Thaman, 2002). Conditional financing led to a homogenisation of reforms imposed in these Pacific nations, a 'dependency of the 'independent' (Jourdan and Salaun, 2013). Tolley (2008) highlights this process of dependency and a lack of self-discretion in relation to the provision of aid finance for basic education.

4.2.1. GOALS AND PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

The vision statement of the Samoa Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) is:

> *A quality holistic education system that recognises and realises the spiritual, cultural, intellectual and physical potential of all participants, enabling them to make fulfilling life choices.*

> (MESC, 2006, p. 4)

This vision embraces the purpose of education as defined by the Samoan MESC. It clearly identifies four areas of potential that have to be developed in each student: spiritual, cultural, intellectual and physical. The purpose of developing these areas is to enable the students to make "fulfilling life choices" (MESC, 2006, p. 4). The understanding reflected in this vision is greater than a teacher-centred or knowledge-based perspective of education, it is one that is based on learning and the capacities of the students. The aim is not to create a more effective and prosperous work force, but that the students are enabled to direct their own futures to what they find fulfilling, and make positive choices that will give them satisfaction in their lives. The "holistic" approach to education is gaining hold in mainstream policy, boundaries between education sectors are becoming less rigid, and a process of preparation for the future is fostered, beyond rigid structures of assessment and preparation for the work force (Teasdale, 2005).

Puamau (2005, 2006a, 2006b) writes on the need for Pacific education to take a holistic approach towards education. She identifies the need for each child to learn the language and culture of their society, and that the curriculum itself must be grounded in this knowledge. Developing a balance in education between 'knowing', 'doing', 'being' and 'living together', as outlined in the Delors Report (1996), is another area that Puamau and other Pacific educators often refer to (Puamau, 2005, 2006a; Teasdale, Tokai, & Puamau, 2004; Teasdale, 2005; Thaman, 2001, 2002). The third area of focus that Puamau highlights as an area of need for education in the Pacific is related to the spiritual development of children. She proposes that, because of the Christian nature of most Pacific countries, a biblical world view should underpin the school system. The goals of the Ministry reflect many of the same aims as are articulated by Puamau such as a holistic approach and inclusion of spiritual development.

Authors Marc Epstein and Kristi Yuthas (2012) argue that students in developing countries need life skills, not academic skills that have been imported from Western education systems. They highlight the need for skills in areas such as entrepreneurship, health maintenance, teamwork, problem solving and project management. Their suggestions are not simply for curriculum change, but for complete transformation in teaching techniques. Some initial efforts have been made in the Pacific region (with initiatives such as the PRIDE), which has similar goals of providing opportunities for Pacific youth to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will prepare young people to successfully contribute to the development of their communities (Coxon & Munce, 2008). As explained in Chapter 3, the RPEIPP is aiming to develop capacity for leadership in education in the Pacific, with Pacific Islanders setting the direction, standards and policy for the people of the Pacific (Coxon & Munce, 2008; Puamau, 2006b; Sanga, 2011).

The Ministry of Education for Samoa (2006) sees education as a basic human right, and as such, that every child in Samoa should be included in the system. The perception of an effective school in Samoa is one that has a good academic record, high moral standards of behaviour and does well in sports (Afamasaga, 2007). There are many expectations from the community as to what education should provide, mostly this is in the area of employment and the ability to generate a good income (Afamasaga, 2007; Puamau, 2006b).

4.2.2. Samoan Education Policies

The Ministry of Education, in their strategic plan (2006), place Samoan education in the context of regional and international goals and agreements. Among the regional initiatives mentioned are: the FBEAP, the PRIDE and the Pacific Plan. The international goals that they frame their planning within include: the EFA declaration and the MDGs. The goals that are outlined in the strategic plan of the Ministry are following international goals and trends, namely, with a focus on: basic education (or more specifically, primary education), early childhood education, and reducing gender disparity. Interestingly, the elimination of gender disparity in Samoa is related to the under-performance of boys at school, rather than the international concern relating to women's participation in education.

Samoa has a significant focus on utilising and strengthening the cultural heritage of its peoples in all levels of education, elements of *fa'aSamoa* are evident in all aspects of the Ministry's functioning. Engagement of the village, '*aiga* and Church are seen as essential to the success of the educational programmes, particularly early childhood and primary schools. Government primary schools are village owned and managed by school committees. The Ministry provides the teachers, stationary, curriculum and assessment (MESC, 2006). This relationship between the village and the Ministry illustrates *fa'aSamoa* – the interconnectedness between the formal structures of government and the village structures in the setting of the primary school. Early childhood programmes are given priority as a means of preventing illiteracy later in life (Vaai, 2004). The national language policy of Samoa aims to have literacy in both Samoan and English languages (Vaai, 2004).

The Ministry of Education (2006) describes the Samoan aims for education at all levels as being: equity, quality, relevance, efficiency, and sustainability. Five aspects of all levels of education are given more detail in relation to these aims: management, resources, facilities, technology and partnership. Close collaboration between the Ministry and donor agencies is included in many parts of the aims section, as well as reference to international and regional goals. The Ministry highlights that there is still a challenge in engaging the community around the school in the educational process, other than their participation for physical maintenance of facilities. The Ministry also highlights the challenge of

developing creative teachers with the capacity to create learning-centred classrooms that cater for different learning styles, rather than traditional teacher-dominated classrooms. This is a result of the implementation of a western model of education and speaks of Samoa's colonial past (Afamasaga, 2007; Puamau, 2005, 2006b; Teasdale, 2005).

4.2.3. Education systems in Samoa

The educational values and philosophy of Samoa emerge from its historical context.

> *"The curricula, teaching methods, assessment and evaluation methods, languages of instruction, administration and management models, and organisational cultures of schooling in the Pacific continue in hegemonic forms, usually closely resembling those in place during the old colonial days"*

(Puamau, 2006b, p. 3).

The education system in Samoa is well established, formalised, institutionalised and a product of colonisation. This is similar to the majority of the Pacific, and most colonised countries who have adopted an imported education system from their colonisers. Teasdale (2005) describes the historic transformation that took place from an educational focus on teachers, to one that is centred on learning and the student. He highlights how the education that emerged in the time of the industrial revolution was a system of knowledge delivery to prepare a more effective workforce, and it was this system that was disseminated in the Pacific by Christian missionaries and is still very evident (Afamasaga, 2007; Puamau, 2006). Early schooling systems in Samoa adopted a more holistic educational pedagogy, as compared with the institutionalised modern schooling system. The students were responsible for their environment, their food, and seem to have been eager and active protagonists of their own learning process which was not considered a separate activity from everyday life (Buatava, 2009). The teacher created his own curriculum of sorts, utilising literacy, numeracy and education on appropriate behaviours and *faaSamoa* (Afamasaga, 2007). This picture of early education systems in Samoa includes an awareness of the environment and the realities of life, students were allowed to go home part way during the day for essential

chores that needed to be done for the family (Afamasaga, 2007).

Schools are well established and are primarily supported by the government. There are a total of 207 schools in Samoa; 165 (80%) of which are government funded and operated; of the remaining, 33 (16%) are missions and private schools. The Ministry of Education provides curriculum support and in-servicing of teachers to all schools in Samoa (Vaai, 2004). UNdata (2014, n.p.) puts the primary-secondary gross enrolment rate from 2006 to 2012 at 97.1 for females and 89.3 for males. The literacy rate in Samoa is 98.8%, and the government expenditure on education is 5.8% (CIA, 2014, n. p.). Although Samoa rates comparatively high on literacy and enrolment rates, it is not without challenges. The relevance of the education is questioned, as are the mechanisms of delivery and assessment, the standards and goals education (Afamasaga, 2007; Coxon & Munce, 2008; Puamau, 2005; Sanga, 2011; Taufe'ulungaki, 2001).

The education system is implemented in two stages. Primary education is for 8 years (Years 1 to 8), and for children between the ages of 5 and 14 years old school is compulsory (MESC, 2013). Compulsory primary education is a newly introduced law which is being strongly enforced in Samoa, with the Prime Minister publicly stating that parents will be locked up if they fail to send their children to school (Tavita, 2011b). The New Zealand Government is supporting the compulsory, free primary education system in Samoa, and now also assisting with a scheme to pay fees at secondary school level (Press Secretariat, 2012). At the end of Year 8 is a compulsory national examination, the Samoa Primary Education Certification Assessment (SPECA) in English which then determines which high school the student is able to study at based on a ranking system, with the top schools located in Apia (MESC, 2013b). There has been progress in increasing the quality of rural schooling so that the school system is not as biased towards certain urban centres with selected schools as in the past (Tavita, 2011a). Secondary education is for a period of 5 years, Years 9 to 13, and is delivered at government, private and mission secondary colleges. Upon completion of Year 12 and 13 examinations students receive the Samoa School Certificate and Samoa Secondary Leaving Certificate respectively (MESC, 2013b).

Samoa is continuing to reduce school drop-out rates, particularly at primary school level. Since 1995 there has been a steady drop, with the first half of 2013

reporting no drop outs at primary level (MESC, 2013). There is still a high dropout rate for Years 12 and 13, although this has also been falling, with rates from 2011 being between 25% and 31% (MESC, 2013).

Early childhood education was included in government education policies in 1995 (MESC, 2006). As of 2013 there were 97 early childhood centres in Samoa, 42 of these are affiliated with a Church and the remaining are community or private (MESC, 2013).

The number of teachers has gradually increased in Samoa, as at 2013 there were 2,450 teachers in all schools (MESC, 2013). The teachers are receiving a long-awaited salary readjustment of 21%, and with the implementation of a new teacher act the government is hoping to lift the standard of teaching in Samoa (Tuiletufuga, 2014). Ninety-six percent of the primary school teachers and 82% of secondary school teachers held the required teaching and academic qualifications in 2007 (MESC, 2007, pp. 132–133). The national standard for student to teacher ratio is 30:1 for primary schools and 20:1 for secondary, nationally these goals are met on average, but there are still a few districts whose ratios do not meet this standard. The Ministry recognises that there is a shortage of physical facilities for schooling; classrooms, desks and chairs (MESC, 2013a, p. 20). The Government policy of the village being responsible for the physical facilities can have a negative impact if the community is not able to meet the needs of that school. The Government of Japan has provided assistance to a number of primary and secondary schools throughout Samoa to assist with infrastructural needs (Tavita, 2011c, 2012, 2013).

The language of instruction is a topic of debate for Samoa. The discussion is around the importance of vernacular language as compared to the economic opportunities that are more easily accessed by an English-language education (MESC, 2006). As previously mentioned, Samoan is the language that is most commonly used in Samoa and allows for the expression of cultural ideology, reinforcing the importance of *faaSamoa*, and English is the second language. However, due to the way that the school system was established, education is delivered in English, limiting opportunities and economic choices for those not fluent in English (MESC, 2006). The practice in schools has been that of transitional bilingualism, with the aim to have individuals fully literate in both

English and Samoan, where the Samoan language initially supports the development of English language which then takes over as the primary language of instruction (MESC, 2006). Many challenges arose as a result of this policy, including the perceptions that Samoan was of lesser value ideologically and practically, and that English was a better language for education (MESC, 2006). There were also practical challenges that occurred in the change from Samoan, as the language of instruction, to English, in Year 7, resulting in limited language expansion in students (MESC, 2006).

There are two universities in Samoa; the National University of Samoa and the University of the South Pacific, which offer degree-level courses. In addition, vocational education and training is offered at Samoa Polytechnic. The rate of Year 13 students transitioning to tertiary education has been between 58% and 71% for the years 2010 to 2013 (MESC, 2013a, p. 11). Samoa has very high levels of tertiary education, with many professionals and executives having doctorates or masters-level qualifications. New Zealand and Australia provide a significant amount of aid money in the form of overseas scholarships, in present day policy as well as historically (Cassity, 2008; Mundy, 2006). These scholarships are designed to bring the recipient to the funding country, immerse them in the culture and society, educate them in a relevant field, and then have the recipient return to their home country often to fulfil requirements of bonding. These scholarships bring significant political and cultural influence in the recipient society through establishing lasting ties to the donor country (Tolley, 2008).

Non-formal education programmes are still minor in comparison with the large-scale formal education system in Samoa. There are education programmes offered by NGOs to raise awareness about different issues, such as, marine conservation, waste management and domestic violence (Scheyvens, 2005; Vaai, 2004). Professional development opportunities are offered to those working in businesses and government departments and community courses can be found in crafts (Vaai, 2004).

4.3. CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has outlined the development context of Samoa, including the geographic features, economic structures, governance, cultural values and

features of the population distribution. The relatively small size of Samoa, a small and youthful population, strong cultural values that – along with the Church – exert significant influence on everyday life, high rates of migration and remittances, stable government and colonial past; all create an environment that both links Samoa to global forces (through reliance on ODA, remittances and colonial ties) and is indicative of Samoa's specific needs and values.

A brief exploration as to the purpose of education, drawing on Pacific experts in education, provided a broader context to the description of priorities and purposes that were found in the Samoan education system. The education system in Samoa was then explored in more detail, including a historical background, the language of instruction, information on schools and teachers and opportunities for higher education. These all indicate a well-developed school system, which still relies on outside input for many aspects and struggles to meet its own standards for resourcing and teacher ratios. The purpose of education that is given as the vision of the MESC is one that aligns with the vision from Pacific education experts, but close analysis shows that much of the policy is closely informed by international education goals. This will be further explored in Chapter 5 through an analysis into two of the main donors to Samoa, and a close comparison of these donors with the Samoan education policy.

Chapter 5: Samoan National Priorities and International Pressures

This chapter will discuss the intersection that occurs between the global education agenda and the priorities of the Samoan Ministry of Education. This intersection between the global and local is at the heart of my research aim – to explore international development priorities in the Samoan education system. The scope of this research project does not allow for an analysis of education in practice in Samoa, but will explore the dynamics, possible pressures, influence and interplay between the international forces and this small island state through an analysis at the level of policy. Following the focus in Chapter 4 on the context of Samoa and its education system, including the economic, geographic and political features which shape education, this chapter will look at the role of aid in Samoan education, it will identify some recent aid projects and financial expenditure in the Samoan education system. Through an analysis of some of the main donors' policies, it will be possible to see the prioritisation of certain thematic areas and how this relates to funding priorities. This chapter will then analyse the impact of these priorities on the education policy of Samoa.

5.1. International Aid Agency Priorities on Education

To begin, I will look at two of the most significant international aid agencies whose presence is felt in Samoa. The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) are two of the largest development partners in Samoa. Through an analysis of their priorities and policies it is possible to gain an understanding of the potential influence they may have on education in Samoa.

The New Zealand and Australian governments each provide international assistance to their development partners. This assistance is delivered through the New Zealand MFAT and the Australian DFAT, it is explicitly and intimately linked with international politics and trading relationships (Davis, 2011).

Samoa's largest source of development assistance is the Australian Government, who in 2013-14 provided 40% of all aid received by Samoa from OECD member countries (Australian Government DFAT, 2014a, p. 3). The Asia Development Bank provides another 17%, followed by New Zealand with 14%, and Japan with 12% (Australian Government DFAT, 2014, p. 3). In the area of education New Zealand donates the most amount of aid of any of the OECD countries (OECD, 2015b).

Before the current centre-right governments came to power, both countries had semi-autonomous or independent ODA programmes (NZAID and AusAID) (Lowy Institute, 2014). These were working with the primary mission of reducing poverty, and strove to implement best-practice in development thinking. Chapters 2 and 3 explored some of the underlying theories that inform development practice. With the political change in Australia and New Zealand there is a move from more humanitarian, human-rights approaches, towards economic and political approaches (Mcgregor, Challies, Overton, & Sentes, 2013). The integration of the ODA agencies with foreign policy sought to combine diplomatic goals with development assistance. Removing this independence takes away from the legitimate needs of people in poverty and international assistance becomes primarily a tool for political influence.

5.1.1. Australian Overseas Development Assistance

The Australian government announced in December 2014 that they are reducing international development assistance by 3.7 billion over four years (Lowy Institute, 2014, n. p.). This is the most dramatic budget cut ever introduced. Over these four years, the Australian government will reduce overseas development assistance by 33% (Lowy Institute, 2014, n. p.). The impact of these cuts will be felt most keenly in those parts of the world furthest away from Australia (for example in Sub-Saharan Africa), whereas the closest neighbours of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea will be less affected (Lowy Institute, 2014). The Australian Aid Programme is becoming more regionally focused around the immediate neighbours in the Pacific and South East Asia (Australian Government DFAT, 2014b). Samoa will likely escape the full force of the severe budget cuts due to its location in the Pacific which is one of the areas of focus for Australia.

It is explicitly stated in the Australian Government DFAT strategic plan that the aim of overseas assistance is not poverty reduction – but the promotion of Australia's national interests, through such means as economic growth and poverty reduction. The decisions on what area of development and how much to 'invest' in overseas countries are based not only on the needs of the country, but also the national interest of Australia. This process is illustrated in Figure 5.1 below, from the strategic plan of Australia's DFAT. The figure shows the "investment" (ODA) provided by Australia going into six main sectors that are targeted to impact on both development of the private sector and human development, which in turn leads to the promotion of "Australia's national interests" (the ultimate goal).
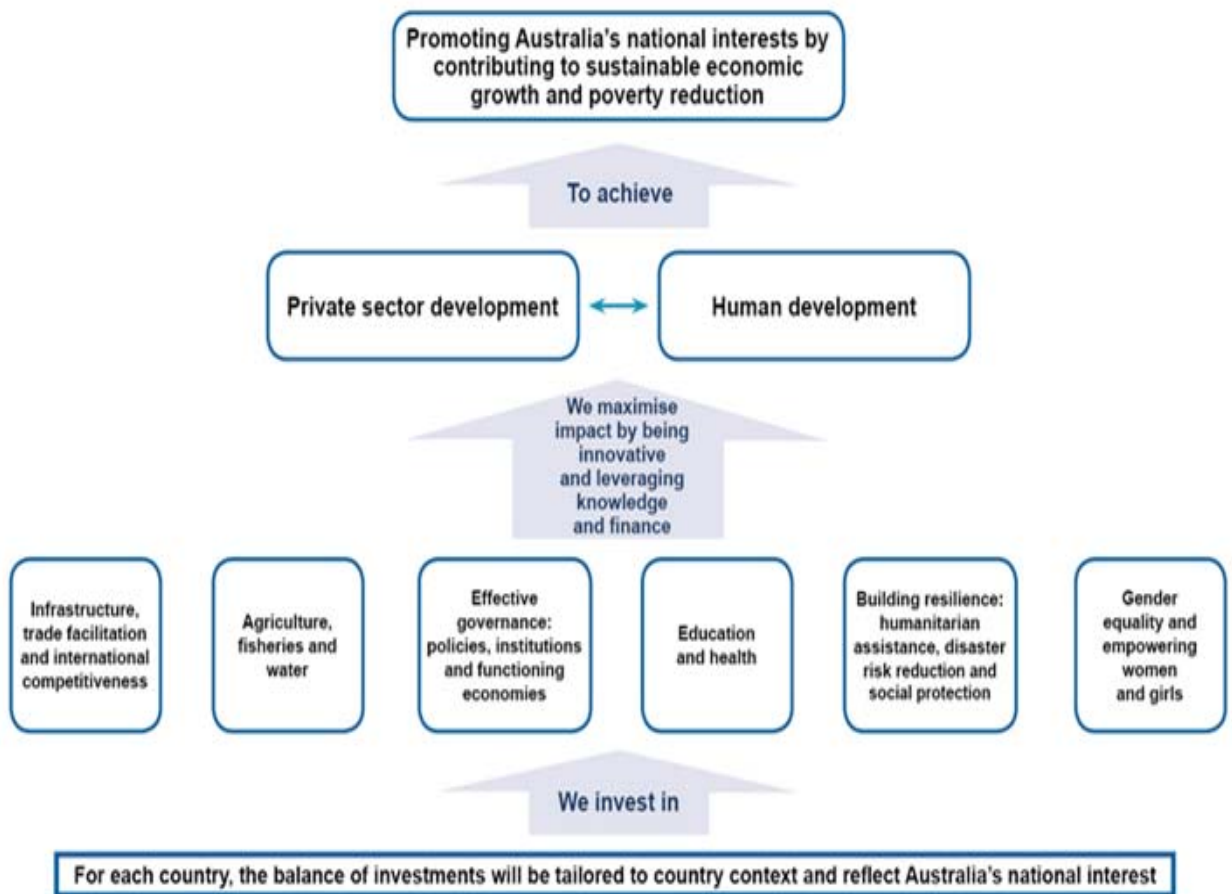

Figure 5.1: "A new strategic framework for the aid program" (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs, 2014b, p. 2)

Australia's ODA is focused in certain areas of intervention, and education is one of the main areas that Australia invests in. The 2014-15 budget allocation has education receiving the largest amount of aid at 23% of the total budget allocation, as illustrated in figure 5.2.

2014/15 estimated allocation by sector
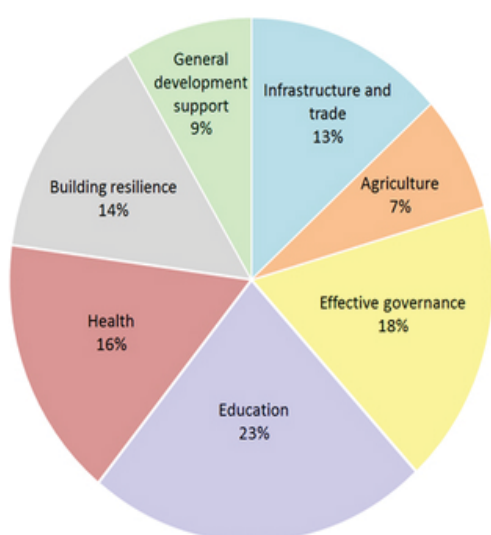
Sector	2014/15 Budget Estimate
Infrastructure, trade facilitation and international competitiveness	13 per cent
Agriculture, fisheries and water	7 per cent
Effective governance: policies, institutions and functioning economies	18 per cent
Education	23 per cent
Health	16 per cent
Building resilience: humanitarian assistance, disaster risk reduction and social protection	14 per cent
General development support	9 per cent

Figure 5.2: *Australian Government DFAT 2014/15 estimated allocation by sector* (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015)

In 2013-14 the total percentage of aid for education in the Australia bilateral programme was 25% (see figure 5.2), a total expenditure of AU $5,839,987.10. This was to achieve the objective to "support Samoa's ambition to achieve and move beyond MDG targets to address better quality and more equitable education for all" (Australian Government DFAT, 2014, p. 4). This expanded view that is espoused in the Partnership for Development agreement between Samoa and Australia shows that Australia is committed to a broader mandate than the MDGs. The Australian and Samoan Governments have partnered to address the quality issues in education in Samoa. Samoa has one of the highest enrolment rates in the Pacific, and is completely on track to achieve 100% access to primary school education (currently they have a 97% enrolment rate) (Australian

Government DFAT, 2014a, p. 5). However, with the very low rates of achievement in literacy and numeracy in both regional assessments (SPBEQ, 2013) and national level assessments (Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level tests-SPELL), concern about the quality of education has become a significant focus of the Australian Government's assistance.

One of my research questions is whether the international agenda is significantly influencing the Samoan Government through the delivery of aid. The Australian Government is the largest donor to Samoa, and a significant donor for education, but to know the alignment with the international agenda, it is necessary to analyse exactly where this aid for education is reaching. Australian aid was used for an increase in access to education, but it is not explicitly reported what proportion (Australian Government DFAT, 2014c).

In the most recent year that has published information (2013/14), Australian aid for education in Samoa contributed towards the "development of teacher manuals for an outcomes based bilingual curriculum and to training 1000 out of 1600 teachers to deliver this curriculum" (Australian Government DFAT, 2014a, p. 5). They also assisted with curriculum development and training, and the implementation of teacher professional standards. A large project from Australia over the last few years has been to improve access to education for children with disabilities and ensure that their needs are being met through a comprehensive special education policy, the Samoa Inclusive Education Demonstration Program (Australian Government DFAT, 2013, 2014a). Post-School Education and Training (PSET), along with Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), have also been assisted with ODA from Australia. Tertiary scholarships for specific areas of need identified by the government of Samoa continue to be another main area of educational aid from Australia; 39 scholarships were awarded in 2012 and 52 in 2013 with a bond system to ensure they return to Samoa and work in the relevant Ministries (Australian Government DFAT, 2013, p. 8, 2014a, p. 6). Seventy percent of Australian aid for education was dedicated to scholarships in the 1990s, and as these students progress through their careers they continue to have close ties with Australia (Tomaveski, 2004).

Australia had four main objectives for their assistance in the year 2013-14, education was the first of these. In comparison with the other three objectives,

education receives more funding than health (which took 10% of Australia's budget), but is dwarfed by the assistance given to goals for economic stability and improved governance which took 64%, totalling almost 15 million (Australian Government DFAT, 2014a, p. 4). The amount of assistance provided, shows that education is an important area that receives a significant amount of aid from the Australian government, but is not *the* priority.

Australia has partnered with New Zealand for the Samoa School Fees Grants Scheme, which is aiming to increase primary school attendance by providing the school with a grant in lieu of fees (Australian Government DFAT, 2013). This is aiming to achieve the MDG 2 for Samoa – to have all primary students enrolled in primary school.

5.1.2. New Zealand Overseas Development Assistance

New Zealand's ODA, similar to Australia, has a regional focus in the Pacific (New Zealand MFAT Aid Programme, 2011). The four priority themes of the New Zealand Aid Programme are: investing in economic development, promoting human development, improving resilience and responding to disasters, and building safe and secure communities (New Zealand MFAT Aid Programme, 2012, pp. 11–13). Basic education is the first policy area outlined for promoting human development by the New Zealand MFAT (New Zealand MFAT Aid Programme, 2012). They then describe the importance of secondary and tertiary education, and technical and vocational training. Scholarships are another large part of the New Zealand Aid Programme (New Zealand MFAT Aid Programme, 2012). Scholarships (for foreign students to study in the donor country) were the main form of international assistance in the 1980s and 90s from New Zealand and Australia (Luteru and Teasdale, 1993). The role of scholarships in providing more benefits to the donor country than the recipient country, and serving to reinforce ties of diplomacy between the two countries has been much discussed (see for example: Luteru & Teasdale, 1993; Tolley, 2008; Tomasevski, 2004).

The New Zealand MFAT allocated 9% of the overall ODA budget for education, a total of NZ $134 million, for the years 2012 to 2015. This is not including the scholarships programme of the New Zealand MFAT, which is another 11% or NZ $171 million. Putting these two together accounts for a 20% portion of the

budget, which is one of the largest portions of budget allocation. Education (with 9% of the budget allocation, shown in figure 5.3) comprises one of the largest sectors (New Zealand MFAT Aid Programme, 2012). The allocation of ODA by sector is illustrated in figure 5.3.

New Zealand MFAT Aid allocation
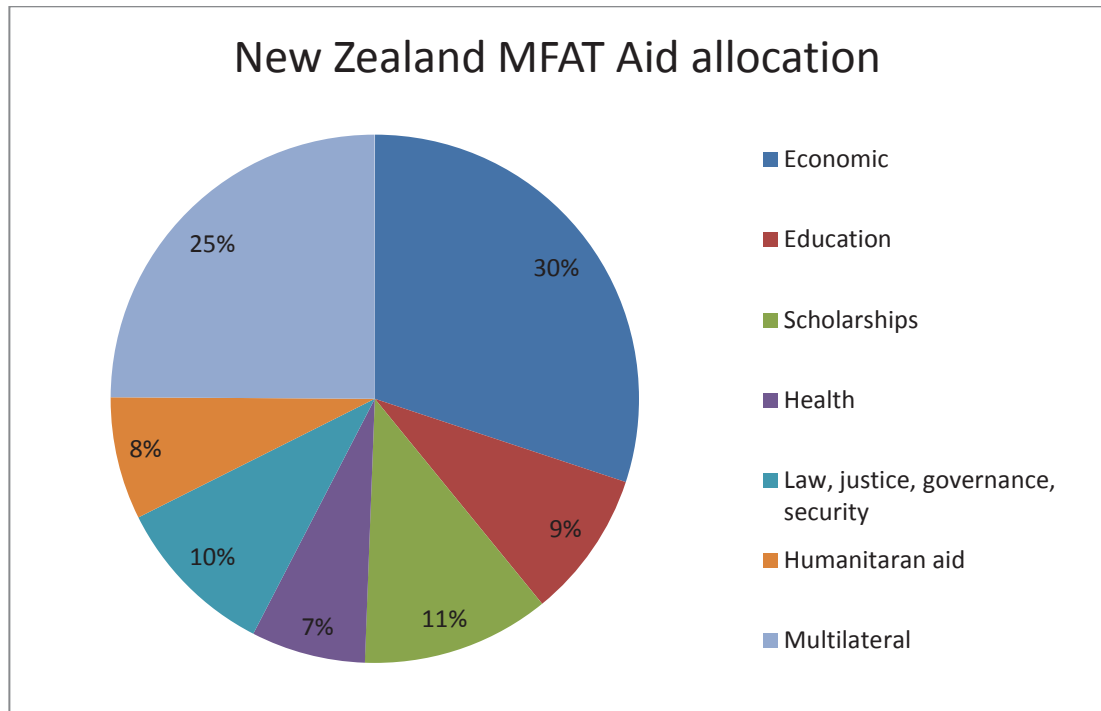
Figure 5.3: New Zealand Aid Allocation by Sector (data from New Zealand MFAT Aid Programme, 2012, p. 20)

Over the three year period of 2012-15 the New Zealand MFAT allocated NZ $38 million to ODA for Samoa, which is 6% of the total budget allocation (New Zealand MFAT, 2012, p. 18). In addition, Samoa benefits from the multilateral and regional programmes that are supported by New Zealand and Australia.

The New Zealand Aid Programme has implemented a School Fee Relief Scheme since the end of 2009 which provides funding to remove or reduce primary school fees. The New Zealand MFAT budgeted a total of more than three million dollars, and has spent a little under two million dollars up to the close of the 2013-14 financial year (New Zealand MFAT Aid Programme, 2014). From the middle of 2013, the New Zealand MFAT introduced a Secondary School Fee Grant Scheme, which will enable the first four years of secondary school to be provided without the previously associated school fees. It is a five year programme with a

NZ $5 million allocation. In the first year of reporting NZ $1.8 million was spent (New Zealand MFAT Aid Programme, 2014).

New Zealand Development Scholarships, later called New Zealand Pacific Scholarships, had an expenditure of more than three million dollars in the year 2011/12, with a budgeted NZ $4.9 million available (New Zealand MFAT Aid Programme, 2014). This allocation is for Samoan students to study in approved education institutions in New Zealand. This ODA is expended in New Zealand through educational institutions and living expenses, subsequently, this aid money does not enter Samoa.

In figure 5.4 the allocation of New Zealand ODA is shown by sector as reported for their international monitoring protocol. It is possible to see a change in a short period of time from primarily providing ODA to health and education, towards ODA for renewable energy assistance. This reflects the changing nature of international aid based on international trends, of which climate change and renewable energy are currently very popular.

Allocated New Zealand ODA in Samoa
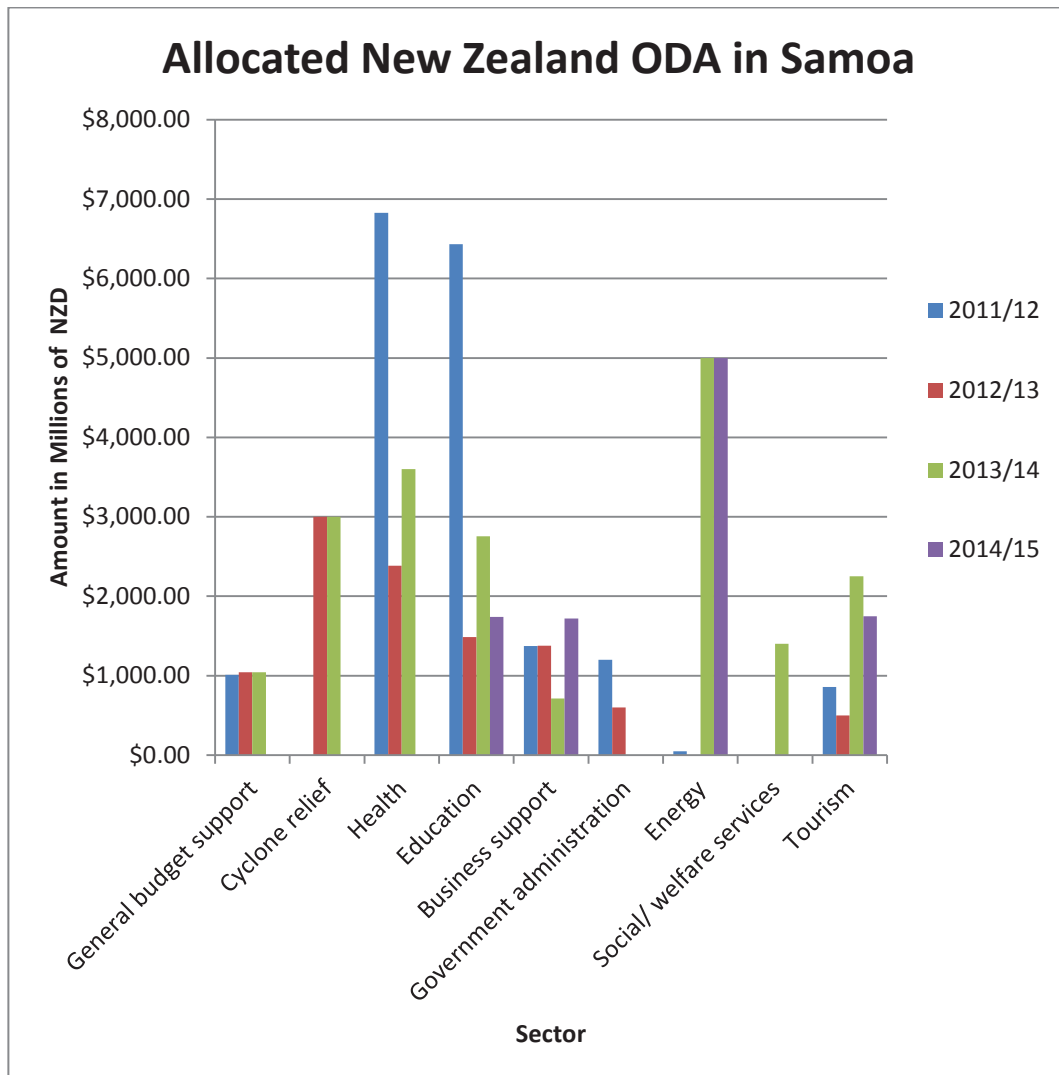
Figure 5.4: Allocated New Zealand ODA in Samoa (data from New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Aid Programme, 2014)

New Zealand ODA reflects both their national priorities and the global education agenda. They provide a significant portion of ODA to education, which indicates their alignment with the education for development paradigm. In addition, a large amount of ODA is provided as scholarships for students to study in New Zealand, which is problematic as it is funding that does not reach the Samoan education system. The recent school fee relief projects indicate a correspondence with MDG 2, to assist Samoa to achieve universal access to primary education.

5.2. SAMOAN NATIONAL PRIORITIES

The government of Samoa sets the overarching goal for the development of

Samoa as "Improved Quality of Life for All" (Ministry of Finance - Economic Policy and Planning Division, 2012). The Pacific Islands have different conceptions as to what poverty and development are. The worst form of poverty is regarded as someone not knowing how to behave appropriately, or not having the ability to contribute to the well-being of their community (Johansson Fua, 2014). The Minister of Finance states in his introduction to the Strategy for the Development of Samoa (Ministry of Finance - Economic Policy and Planning Division, 2012, p. 5), that "achieving these strategic outcomes will result in the attainment of Samoa's Millennium Development Goals and targets". This is indicative of the incorporation of what is considered important in Samoa (improved quality of life), with the international development goals. Of the fourteen key national outcomes, the seventh one is "improved focus on access to education, training and learning outcomes", which comes under the "social policies" sector. Aside from the education key outcome, three other areas include one or two key indicators that are in the area of education and there are four other key outcomes that are also explicitly related to education provision.

5.2.1. Education Priorities

The Minister for Education, Sports & Culture for Samoa stated that education is aiming to "make a positive and permanent contribution to our national development plans and to achieving the international development goals" (MESC, 2013b, p. 3). This statement provides some insight into the balance between achieving the national development plans (as set by local agents) and international development goals (the global education agenda). This demonstrates that international development goals have priority of place alongside the national level plans, with Ministries attempting to balance both in education policies. The strategic plan of the MESC (2013b, p. 7) states that:

> *"education is key to the Strategy for the Development of Samoa, including the need to improve employment prospects and reduce the scarcity of skilled labour that constrains private sector growth".*

It further goes on to state that the vision of the plan "is that all people in Samoa are educated and productively engaged" (MESC, 2013b, p. 7). From these two statements it is possible to determine some of the underlying ideas that are

informing the formulation of education policies, it is clear these ideas are strongly following neo-liberal economic growth models.

The Samoan Ministry of Education (2013b, p. 7) has set five main goals that they are working to achieve. These are:

1. Enhanced quality of education at all levels
2. Enhanced educational access and opportunities at all levels
3. Enhanced relevance of education at all levels
4. Improved sector co-ordination of research, policy and planning development
5. Established sustainable and efficient management of all education resources

The EFA goals and the second MDG of universal access to education are embraced in the second goal of the Ministry. Goal 6 of EFA, to improve all aspects of the quality of education, is very similar to the first goal of the Ministry. The third goal of the Ministry has an outcome to "improve employability of school leavers as a result of education and training responding to national economic, social and cultural needs" (MESC, 2013b, p. 7). The desired outcome of a more skilled and educated workforce again indicates policy that follows neoliberal economic development theories. The fourth goal of sector coordination, is a commonly adopted approach that has emerged with donor organisations (Tolley, 2011). Effective management of resources has always been a priority of donor organisations, to provide accountability for ODA and sustainability for projects. These five goals of the Ministry and their related outcomes are all significantly influenced by the approaches of donor organisations, and their requirements. The voices of Indigenous Pacific educators calling for more culturally relevant education that promotes life-long learning for sustainable growth (detailed in section 3.2.1) are not represented in these goals.

5.2.2. Recent ODA Supported Projects in Samoa

An analysis of recent aid projects in Samoa can be another lens to see the efforts taking place in Samoa to enhance education systems that are supported by outside funding.

The Education Sector Project II (ESP II), a project which has embraced all aspects of education in Samoa including higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education, has been a significant project taking a sector-wide approach (MESC, 2013b). Originally planned for 6 years, it is now in the ninth year of implementation, with a US $30 million budget; over 8 million each from New Zealand and Australia ODA, another 8 million as a loan from ADB, and the balance (just under 5 million) from the Government of Samoa (ADB, 2006; MESC, 2014). This project aimed to integrate infrastructure-based activities (such as the building of MESC headquarters and schools) with funding research studies and other activities focussing on curriculum development and teacher training (ADB, 2006). Another part of the ESP II was connecting all schools to the internet to be able to access teaching resources from a main data portal, which was completed as part of the SchoolNet sub-project (MESC, 2013b).

The Samoa Sports for Development Program has more than doubled their original goals, and been extended further into 2015, since beginning in 2008 (MESC, 2014). The aim is to engage more people in activities to combat the prevalence of non-communicable diseases. Village exercise and sports tournaments have been organised and run successfully. The Samoa inclusive education support project was briefly explained in section 5.1.1 as one of the areas that Australia is providing ODA towards, to try and provide access to education for children with a range of disabilities (MESC, 2013b).

The Samoa School Fee Grant Scheme for primary schools is in its fifth year of operation in 2015 (MESC, 2014, p. 7.). The majority of funding is provided by the Government of Samoa (75%), with the remainder from New Zealand and Australia. The Secondary School Fee Grant Scheme is in its second year, and the majority of funding is provided by New Zealand (75%) with the remainder from the Government of Samoa (MESC, 2014, p. 7).

5.3. Comparison of International and National Level Education Priorities

The largest portion of the Samoan Ministry budget is allocated to the achievement of their first goal, which is to enhance the quality of education, with 63% of the total budget. In comparison, the budget analysis of international aid

donors shows that donors are contributing primarily (with 77% of the total amount) to the second goal – to enhance educational access. This is very much in line with the international goal to achieve greater access to basic education (MDG 2). In the two graphs in figure 5.3 and 5.4 the Samoa MESC educational objectives can be compared by the budget allocation to each goal. The amount of resources that are being put into these different goal areas is a good indication of the level of priority afforded. Figure 5.4 shows the allocated budget for each of the goals of the Ministry; this figure shows that there is a focus on enhancing the quality of education. The vast majority of funds are allocated to this goal. In comparison, in figure 5.5, which shows the funding allocation of ODA to Samoa, it is similarly obvious that the priority for funding by donors is to increase access to education. Educational access, especially to primary education, has been promoted by the global education agenda, as described in Chapter 2, particularly through MDG number 2: to achieve universal primary school access. Because these are two different pools of budget allocation for education, it is possible to consider that the Samoa MESC are coordinating budget allocation with the donors, to ensure there is funding for all areas.

Samoa Education Budget Allocation by Goal

- Goal 1: Enhanced quality of education at all levels
- Goal 2: Enhanced educational access and opportunities at all levels
- Goal 3: Enhanced relevance of education at all levels
- Goal 4: Improved sector co-ordination of research, policy and planning development
- Goal 5: Established sustainable and efficient management of all education resources

Figure 5.5: Budget allocation for education goals by the Samoa Ministry of Education (data from: MESC, 2013, pp. 48–50)

Donor ODA to Samoa by National Goals

- Goal 1: Enhanced quality of education at all levels
- Goal 2: Enhanced educational access and opportunities at all levels
- Goal 3: Enhanced relevance of education at all levels
- Goal 4: Improved sector co-ordination of research, policy and planning development
- Goal 5: Established sustainable and efficient management of all education resources

Figure 5.6: Donor ODA to Samoa by National Goals (data from: MESC, 2013, pp. 48–50)

5.4. CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

This chapter began with an analysis of the aid programmes of Australia and New Zealand. Both countries seem to be informed by neo-liberal economic ideas about education as a tool for developing a workforce which will lead to economic growth. They are also both explicitly seeking what is advantageous for their countries through their aid policies. Both countries have significant allocations for educational aid, but it is not the most heavily supported area, and much of the educational aid allocation is for scholarships to study in the donor country.
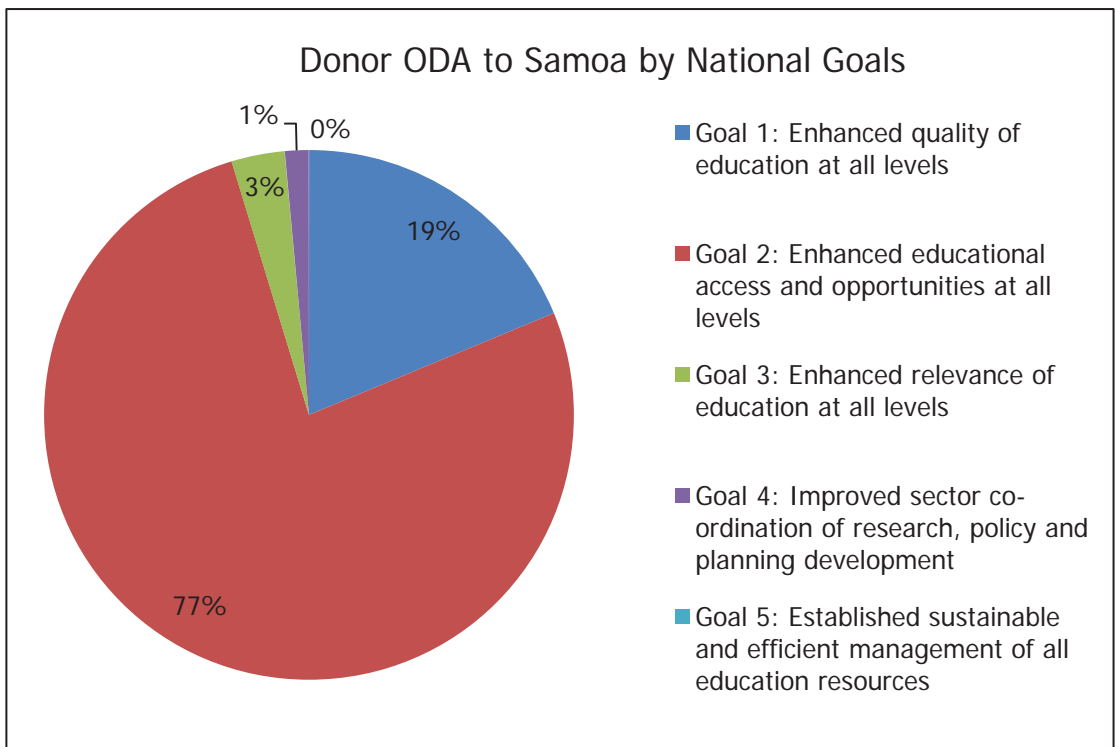
The goals and priorities of the Samoan Ministry of Education include goals for educational access and quality of education. The priority of the Ministry is the quality of education, as demonstrated by their budget allocation to this area. In comparison, the donor allocation is heavily focused on access to education, which will assist Samoa in their efforts to achieve MDG 2. The lack of convergence of funding allocation between the donors and the Ministry could represent a higher level of coordination between donors and partner countries to ensure that all education needs are met. Alternatively, it could be postulated that there is a divergence at the level of prioritisation between donors and the Samoan Ministry. With the emergence of Sustainable Development Goals as the MDGs are drawing to a close, it could also be that Samoa is now moving towards these goals, and still being heavily influenced by a changing global agenda.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter draws together the evidence from Chapters 3, 4 and 5 to answer the research aim and questions, drawing on the literature review in Chapter 2. A summary of the research project and the approach that was taken for this research is described. Following this, each research question is looked at individually, before drawing together the findings in a discussion on the aim of the research project.

6.1. REFLECTIONS ON THE AIMS OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT AND RESEARCH APPROACH

The aim of this research project was to explore international development priorities in the Samoan education system. This was explored with three research questions in mind:

1. Do the priorities of the Samoan education policy correspond to international development goals?
2. How have international development goals impacted donor involvement in education in Samoa?
3. Does the global education agenda align with needs identified by Samoan educators?

The approach that was taken in this research project was an indigenous development and bottom-up approach (Briggs, 2008; Parnwell, 2008). This approach was taken to enable the voices of indigenous Pacific Islanders to be heard as the primary response to my research aim and questions. The methodology for the research project was a case study of the Samoan national education policy, and the method of data collection was a detailed document analysis (O'Leary, 2012). A case study of the Samoan education policy was selected as a way of exploring the interplay between the priorities of the international level (represented by donor agencies) and priorities of indigenous Pacific Islanders. The documents for analysis were primary source material, such as strategic plans, budgets and policy statements from donor organisations and

the Ministry of Education in Samoa; and articles, speeches, books and other published materials from Pacific Island educators. Secondary source materials were also utilised, particularly in Chapter 2 for the literature review.

6.2. Summary of Key Issues

The research report was structured by first giving the global perspective on education and development in the literature review, followed by a regional context for the Pacific in Chapter 3, and then a more detailed description of the context and education situation in Samoa. This approach provided a rich context for the analysis in Chapter 5 of the Samoan education policy, the policies of donors and the views of Pacific authors.

This research project began with an introduction to the topic and the methodology being utilised. Chapter 1 explained the relevance of the research by showing how education has become a primary development strategy (Coxon & Baba, 2003; Tarabini, 2010). The influence that international level agendas can have on national or local level organisations and development efforts was also introduced (Kilby, 2011, 2013; Rappleye, 2011; Tolley, 2008).

The emergence of a global agenda for education was clearly outlined by Tarabini, Coxon & Munce. These authors explained that a global agenda was particularly influenced by neo-liberal economic development, human capital theory and rights-based development. Coxon and Tolley (2002; 2008) showed how these theories informed the emergence of an 'education for development' approach. Two significant events, the Education for All (EFA) conference in 1990, and the Millennium Summit in 2000, resulted in a series of goals for education, in particular the MDG 2: to achieve universal primary access to education (King, 2007; Tarabini, 2010; Tolley, 2008; UNESCO, 2014b). The MDGs and EFA goals and their monitoring processes have become a dominating focus in education for development, and are a concise representation of the global education agenda.

It was these goals that the research project was able to identify in both the Pacific regional education initiatives and Samoan national education policy. Two Pacific regional education initiatives, RPEIPP and PRIDE, were analysed as regional examples of initiatives with both donor funding and indigenous Pacific educators', input and in both of these initiatives there were tensions found

between the donor priorities and the expressed aims of the programme (Coxon & Cassity, 2011; Hind, 2010; Puamau, 2010; Sanga, 2011; 'Ana Maui Taufe'ulungaki, 2014; Thaman, 2014). The needs of ODA recipients that were identified included a recognition of a diversity of situations, cultural realities and state goals (Coxon & Munce, 2008; King & Rose, 2005; Sanga, 2005). It was found in the analysis of aid distribution for education (in Chapter 3), that often these needs were not addressed by donor organisations and were not in alignment with the global agenda for education.

Building on the context of donorship, Chapter 4 then focused on the national education policy of Samoa as a case study, to look at the interplay between international and national level forces. The geographic features of Samoa were described, some historical background and a brief introduction to *fa'aSamoa* and economic factors were explained and how these shape the country. This research project, because of its focus on documented education policy, has then primarily looked at the formal school system in Samoa.

To show examples of the policies of international development organisations, two main bilateral donors who are active in Samoa were selected; New Zealand and Australia. Both of these government aid programmes were found to give some level of priority to education. Both also had an explicit focus on increasing access to primary education, toward achieving MDG 2 in Samoa (Australian Government DFAT, 2014a; New Zealand MFAT Aid Programme, 2012).

The goals of the Samoan MESC were found to be very similar to international goals, including the EFA goals, MDGs and also the emerging sustainable development goals, around issues of access and quality (MESC, 2013b). Some recent projects implemented with the assistance of ODA were analysed for the educational priorities of donors to be compared with those of Samoa. These projects included the second phase of the education sector programme, programmes for sports, inclusive education programmes and school fee relief for primary and secondary students; these last two projects were particularly addressing MDG 2, universal access to education (MESC, 2013b, 2014). More discussion on the alignment between the international agenda for education and the Samoan education system will be explored through an analysis of the findings in response to each of the research questions.

6.3. Discussion in Response to Research Question 1

This and the following sections take the analysis provided in Chapters 2 to 5 to formulate a response and discussion for the research questions. The first research question for this project was:

Do the priorities of the Samoan education policy correspond with international development goals?

The findings from my research indicate a similarity between the Samoan education policy and international development goals. There are three findings that especially indicate a correspondence; the references in policy documents to goals, recent ODA supported education projects, and the allocation of funding by Samoa and donors. To first establish what the international development goals were, the literature review outlined that the EFA conference in 1990 and the Millennium Summit in 2000 were particularly influential for education in developing countries (King & Rose, 2005; Tarabini, 2010). These two gatherings set goals that were to be adopted, monitored and internationally supported for all countries to achieve; the six EFA goals and the MDGs – with goal 2 being to achieve universal primary access to education (King, 2007; Tarabini, 2010; Tolley, 2008). These are then the goals that the research had set out to identify in the Samoan education policy.

The international development goals were explicitly referenced in Ministry strategic documents, and closely monitored by the Ministry (MESC, 2006, 2007). The goals of the Ministry were found to be very similar to these international goals, including the six EFA goals, MDG 2 and also the emerging SDGs (MESC, 2013b). The common elements of the Samoan and international goals are the focus on educational access and quality.

Some of the recent projects funded by ODA that correspond to the international goals included the second phase of the education sector programme, inclusive education programmes and school fee relief for primary and secondary students (MESC, 2013b, 2014). These are all large projects which have run over many years with multi-million dollar donor support, and they are all trying to achieve

the MDG 2 of universal access to education.

The goal of the Samoan Ministry for educational quality was provided with the most funding allocation, which aligns with the move to the SDGs and the broader goals of the Dakar Framework (MESC, 2013b; UNESCO, 2000). The majority of education funding allocation from donor partners to Samoa was for educational access and sector wide coordination, the first of which is an international development goal, whereas the second part is more reflective of donor priorities. The views of Pacific education experts give another perspective on the impact of international goals.

The Samoan education policy reflects the international development goals, as summarised in the words of a Pacific writer on education:

> *"It is not particularly surprising or disappointing to find that Pacific national visions and development and educational priorities are defined by the same principles and notions found in international institutions' and donor agencies' strategic and policy documents."*

> (Taufe'ulungaki, 2002)

The sentiments expressed in this quote indicate that Taufe'ulungaki's (2002) experiences align with the findings of this report – that there is a correspondence between the international agenda and the national policy documents of Pacific countries.

The goals of the Samoan education system were also found to reflect the best-practice of donors (such as sector-wide approaches and resource management), as well as the international goals (access to education and improving educational quality); this linkage was explored in the next research question.

6.4. Discussion in Response to Research Question 2

The second question addressed in this research project was:

How have international development goals impacted donor involvement in education in Samoa?

The involvement of donors in education in Samoa was found to be influenced by international development goals. The findings of this research firstly indicated an alignment between donor policies and goals for access to education. The second consideration introduced was the significant funding allocation that was still being directed towards the priorities set by the donors themselves. The focus on achieving MDG 2 was evident in the recent projects of the aid programmes of Australia and New Zealand (MESC, 2013b), detailed in sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2. This was demonstrated by the significant ODA for primary and secondary school access, and the inclusive education project (MESC, 2013b, 2014). The focus on access to education, especially as the MDGs are nearing their completion, is indicative of donors trying to help Samoa achieve MDG 2.

New Zealand and Australia's aid programmes were found to be attempting to combine a humanitarian and rights-based approach to development, with neo-liberal economic policy and foreign affairs and trade (Australian Government DFAT, 2014b; Davis, 2011; Mcgregor et al., 2013). These were the same approaches that led to the emergence of a global education agenda and the subsequent international goals (Coxon & Baba, 2003; Tarabini, 2010). As a consequence the international goals were able to be readily incorporated into donor policies.

In both countries' ODA allocation, there is a considerable proportion that is allocated to scholarships that are based in the donor country. This is generally recognised as predominately self-serving with the money being spent in the donor country and the purpose being to build long-lasting relationships between countries through the recipients spending a few years in the donor country (Australian Government DFAT, 2014a; Cassity, 2008; Luteru & Teasdale, 1993; Mundy, 2006; Tolley, 2008; Tomasevski, 2004). The example of scholarship

funding is indicative of the donors ODA not being used for the international development goals, but their own goals in foreign relations and trade.

6.5. Discussion in Response to Research Question 3

The third question that was explored in this research project was:

Does the global education agenda align with the needs identified by Samoan educators?

There was a significant mis-alignment between the needs that were identified by Samoan and other Pacific authors on education and the global education agenda. This issue was demonstrated by first exploring the work of Pacific authors on education, followed by a comparison to the global agenda and an analysis of education in Samoa in Chapters' 3 and 4. Some of the common elements of the Pacific authors' views on education included: the complimentary nature of traditional and modern knowledge, the significance of cultural values, education as a life-long process and the need to completely reconceptualise education (from the imported schooling model) by drawing on cultural knowledge to define the purpose and nature of education (Afamasaga, 2002; Fasi, 2002; Nabobo, 2002; Sanga, 2002; Taufe'ulungaki, 2002; Thaman, 2002).

Authors, such as Coxon and Baba (2003), argued that a global agenda for education emerged from the modernisation theories of the 1950s and 60s, and neo-liberal and human capital theories, which postulated that the development of a trained (educated) workforce would lead to economic growth (see also: Coxon & Munce, 2008; Sanga, 2005b; Tolley, 2008). These theories have individualistic, industrial, competitive market economies as the goal of development, values that are completely in disagreement with the collective values of Pacific cultures (Taufe'ulungaki, 2002).

Rights based approaches were also shown to be significant influencers for the emergence of a global education agenda (Taufe'ulungaki, 2002). The declaration of human rights raised education to a basic human right (United Nations, 2015), which informs donor and recipient policies. The Samoan Ministry confirmed the importance of education as a human right in their strategic plan (2006). The

focus on human-rights has been criticised by Indigenous Pacific authors who describe this as not culturally appropriate because of the individualistic values inherent in this approach, which are in opposition to the collective values of the Pacific cultures (Taufe'ulungaki, 2002; Thaman, 2002).

There are more than 200 schools in Samoa, the majority are government funded, but all receive support for curriculum and their teachers (MESC, 2013a; Vaai, 2004). Samoa has enrolment and literacy rates in the high 90th percentile (CIA, 2014, n. p.), but faces challenges relating to relevancy of the education system, the language of instruction and a shortfall in material resources (MESC, 2006, 2013a). There are high rates of students transitioning to tertiary education, and some non-formal education programmes offered by NGOs (MESC, 2013b; Vaai, 2004). By many measures, Samoa has a well-developed system with strong support structures, but this can be contrasted with low achievement in educational assessments and criticism on the relevancy of the education provided.

The Samoan local education experts were represented in this research project through indigenous Pacific authors' work on education, explored in detail in section 3.2.1. They call for culturally-informed education, that is not limited to the school system, is holistic, designed to prepare students for life-long learning and being able to meaningfully contribute to their communities (Sanga, 2002; Taufe'ulungaki, 2002; Thaman, 2001, 2002, 2005). The findings for this research question indicate there is a substantial lack of reference to Pacific cultural values, with a heavy reliance on 'global' values, that are laden with western ideology. Sanga (2002, p. 58) sums this up, voicing great concern for the future of local cultures:

> *"the schooling experience appears to be influenced more by global ideas, others' grounds of knowledge and introduced concepts, thereby neglecting to transmit local cultures to future generations of Pacific children."*

Building on the concept of education being equated with schooling, Sanga is then critical of formal schooling being a mechanism to transmit 'outside' ideologies to the students, rather than their own culture, which as a consequence is becoming threatened. The next section seeks to draw together the findings from all three research questions in relation to the aim of the research project, utilising the

views of Pacific education experts and the global agenda for education.

6.6. RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this research was to explore the influence of international development priorities in the Samoan education system. This was undertaken using a case study of the Samoan national education policy. The multiple informing approaches to education that were identified included cultural relevance, economic development and human rights, and were discussed with perspectives from both indigenous Pacific education experts and donor organisations.

Coxon & Baba (2003), Coxon & Munce (2008) and Tarabini (2010) described the emergence of a global agenda for education, outlined in Chapter 2, the transition of modernisation to neo-liberal economic policies, and how this led to education being seen as a means for economic growth (human capital theory) and poverty reduction. This commonly accepted view led to education being seen as a primary means for enhancing national development and allowed education to be given a key role in development (Coxon & Munce, 2008; Cremin & Nakabugo, 2012; King, 2007; Maitra & Mukhopadhyay, 2012; Mundy, 2006; Tolley, 2008). The human rights perspective of development lent its support to education by declaring education as a basic human right (UNESCO, 2014a), which was found to significantly contribute to the global education agenda and the policy of Samoa. The last few decades of the twentieth century saw the world becoming increasingly globalised, dissatisfied with the level of poverty still prevalent and development interventions thus far (Escobar, 1992; Esteva & Prakash, 1998; van Peer, 2012), leading to a search for new approaches to development. These factors led to education becoming a key aspect of development and contributed to answering the aim of the research project by explaining the reasons behind international aid for education.

ODA for education in the Pacific, which was explored in Chapter 3, provided a context for understanding the Samoan education policy. Sanga (2005) outlined various reasons for the delivery of ODA to the Pacific: the historical context of colonialism and other agreements, the needs of the Pacific Islands and the "big business" that ODA brings with it. Coxon and Munce (2008) argued that the

youthful population of the Pacific was another factor for the increased focus on educational aid, because engaging this population in employment (through education/training) can address economic issues as well as governance concerns. The significant aid flows to education in the Pacific influence the Samoan education policy, as do the cultural, social, economic and political factors which were explored in chapter 4. The educational context of Samoa, including the impact of migration on the skilled teacher availability, a sense of a lack of control of the education policies and a dependency on ODA, indicate some of the reasons why there was a disconnect between the Pacific authors on education and the Samoan policy (Afamasaga, 2002; Jourdan & Salaün, 2013; Tolley, 2008)

The findings of this research project indicate that there is a complicated relationship between a global agenda for education, donor agencies and national level Ministries of Education. From the analysis of the New Zealand and Australian aid programmes, it is possible to see an alignment with the global agenda, while they also have their own interests to maintain, so their ODA allocations reflect this balance, as do their policy documents.

The Samoan Ministry for Education is also finding a balance between many confounding factors, including the historical and contextual reality of the education system, the educational needs of the population as perceived by various actors, and the demands and priorities of donor partners who provide the majority of resources to the functioning of the system. The Samoan Ministry of Education (2006) described the aim of education as developing the spiritual, cultural, intellectual and physical capabilities of students to enable them to make fulfilling life choices. This aligned with many of the ideas expressed by Pacific educators (Puamau, 2005, 2006b; Sanga, 2011; Thaman, 2001). The conclusion that could be reached is that the modern education system closely resembles the system that was implemented with colonisation, and which differs considerably from the more holistic education system that was in place before colonisation (Afamasaga, 2007; Buatava, 2009; Puamau, 2006a).

Chapter 5 showed a comparison of funding allocation in relation to the four goals from the Ministry, providing a reference point to directly compare the Ministry and donor priorities, using the funding allocation as an indicator. The majority of budget allocation of the Ministry was for the goal related to enhancing the quality

of education, whereas the vast majority (more than three quarters) of donor funding was for educational access. This seemed to suggest that donor priorities are predominately aligned with the international goals, and not necessarily aligned with national level priorities, although these could be seen as aligning with the emerging SDG's.

It is heartening to see an emergence of a 'Pacific education agenda' that is discussing, questioning and defining the direction and goals of education for the Pacific, from authors such as Puamau, Thaman, Taufe'ulungaki and Afamasaga. As donor organisations continue to espouse their partnerships with recipient countries, it is hoped that they will become increasingly informed by these indigenous voices for their policy and funding decisions. It became obvious throughout the course of the document analysis that there was a limited availability of published material expressing an indigenous Samoan perspective on education. However, there is a healthy discussion and consensus that has been reached through developments at a regional level, such as RPEIPP and PRIDE, that further reinforces the regional collectivism inherent in Pacific cultures.

Possible areas of future research would be to explore the same questions but selecting other donors (such as the European Union, Japan, Korea and China), and lending agencies (such as the World Bank and Asia Development Bank) as the examples for analysis. To further explore the questions raised by Pacific educators, research is needed into the classroom practice of teachers, leadership traits of school management, community and non-formal education and learning styles of children.

This research project began with the image of a va'a, symbolising education in Samoa, and the question of who is steering its course. The ODA was suggested as being like the wind in the sails of this education va'a, allowing the system to move and function with the financial support of outside partners. The government of Samoa was found to be the captain of the education va'a, showing the strength and capacity to take the direction of education in Samoa towards the SDGs of quality education. Most significantly, it was found that there is an emerging Pacific education agenda giving voice to an alternative view of education for the Pacific. These voices from on board the va'a can be likened to the expert navigators, who set a course for the education va'a based on knowledge handed

down through generations, aiming to steer their passengers, the young people of the Pacific, to well-being and prosperity.

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