

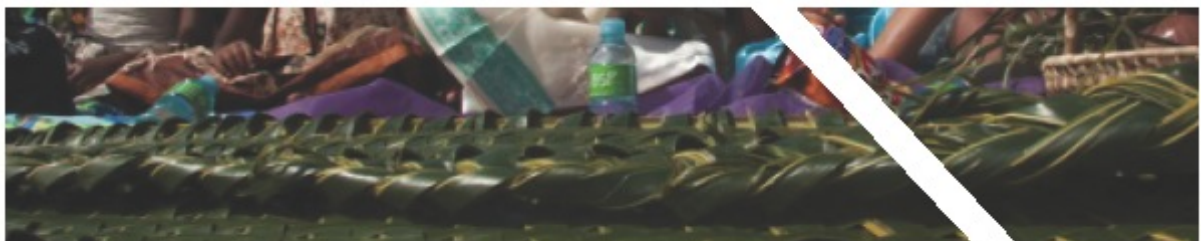
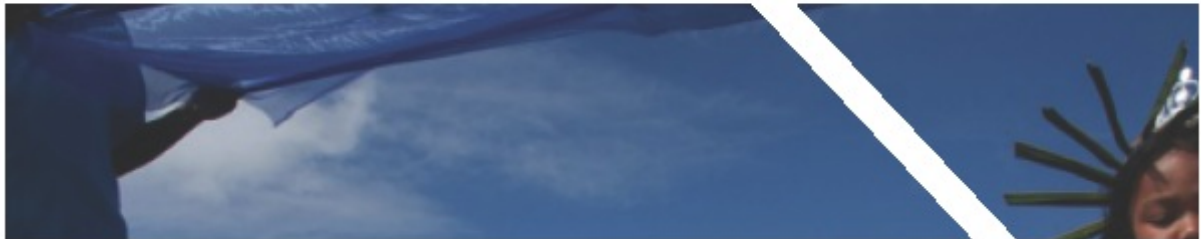
FECTA

ANNUAL
CONFERENCE
REPORT 2014



Fiji Early Childhood Teachers' Association

Quality Childhood, Quality Future





Save the Children
Fiji

Save the Children Fiji (SCF).

Save the Children Fiji (SCF) is a non-government organization that promotes children's rights to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. SCF programmes in Education, Health, Child Protection and Humanitarian Response helps support families and communities in marginalized and disadvantaged communities in Fiji. The *Vuli Taumada Shishak* project funded under the NZ government's *Partnerships in Development Fund* involves ensuring that pre-school children in informal communities around Fiji have access to quality Early Childhood Education so they are well placed to advance into primary education. In 2014, at the end of the 3-year project, a total of 2963 children had enrolled in the 50 community education centres established under the project, and of these, 1654 children have graduated to primary schools.



Fiji Early Childhood Teachers Association (FECTA).

The Fiji Early Childhood Teachers Association (FECTA) is a registered association for early childhood teachers with 18 branches across the country in all four divisions. The association seeks to achieve *Excellence in Early Childhood Education (ECE)*, through the empowerment of its members and branches in professional development, dialogue, local, regional and international networks, research and development, curriculum development and learning centre support. FECTA has been borne out of a steadfast commitment and wisdom of a new generation of ECE teachers who defied all odds, called for new leadership, directions and new insights to move the EC association forward.

Report written by Susan N Grey.

Commissioned by Save the Children Fiji (SCF) and the Fiji Early Childhood Teachers Association (FECTA).

Design and layout, Igenasio Baletasere.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

APTC	-	Australia Pacific Tertiary College
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
EC	-	Early Childhood
ECCE	-	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECE	-	Early Childhood Education
FALD	-	Foundation Areas of Learning and Development
FECTA	-	Fiji Early Childhood Teachers Association
FNU	-	Fiji National University
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goal
MLTC	-	Methodist Lay Training Centre
NNM		Na Noda Mataniciva
PD	-	Positive Discipline
PICs	-	Pacific Island Countries
SCF	-	Save the Children Fiji
SWOT	-	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TSLS	-	Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Scheme
USP	-	University of the South Pacific

This report details the progress of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Fiji through the Fiji Early Childhood Teachers Association (FECTA) annual conference conducted in Labasa, Fiji from December 1-4, 2014. The report provides a historical background to ECE in the Pacific and Fiji, the status update, and the challenges and key lessons for the future. This was led by the Chief Guest and senior international development ECE expert, Dr Anne Glover, followed by Fiji ECE resource personnel, academics, researchers and teachers.

Background

ECE education in Fiji has spanned several decades beginning with some interested expatriate wives and later by local women EC pioneers namely Adi Davila Toganivalu and Unaisi Vasu Tuivaga who played a crucial role nationally, regionally and internationally advocating for EC in Fiji. 1977 – 2010 were the years of collaborative professional development for the then Fiji Early Childhood Association (FECA).

The year 2013, saw the emergence of a new early childhood teachers' organization known as Fiji Early Childhood Teachers Association (FECTA). This marked a new era for ECE as an independent and vocal group of EC teachers called for new directions and pathways to move the EC fraternity forward. It was a call for a new vision, re-organisation and re-branding of FECTA. It needed a response to the needs of EC teachers in the 21st century – a response for capacity building in research and training, curriculum and appropriate assessments, networking, leadership and advocacy for young children who do not have a voice in the communities.

New Pathways

The conference was overwhelmingly rated as successful by the participants as they saw the benefits in *professional development* that were led by international and Fiji ECE experts, academics and researchers, and also the benefits in the workshop sessions on the ECE curriculum guideline, *Na Noda Mataniciva (NNM)*. The networking amongst the participants and the establishment of FECTA itself were also seen as the strengths of the conference as participants examined the corporate profile of their association and a summary of the financial reporting, including the networking that FECTA has in place with organisations such as Save the Children Fiji (SCF), and its international and regional partners.

Opportunities for further advancement were seen in the area of research and development, which emerged through particular presentations from the Chief Guest and the research work pertaining to NNM and ECE education led by the Fiji National University (FNU), Lautoka campus, with areas for improvement focusing on the logistical arrangements of the conference.

The pursuit of professional development at degree-level, the availability of scholarships to help fund such educational advancement, the need to ensure the emergence and continuance of robust, evidence-based ECE research, monitoring and evaluation of ECE and the multi-pronged support needed for Learning Centres, and the association, were key considerations that emerged during the four-day conference. The common theme that underpinned the conference discussions was the recognition that the early childhood years is the most important developmental phase in the lifespan – thus the critical importance of maximising efforts in creating children that are strong in every developmental area. Strong children make a strong nation and a strong Fiji.



Ni Bula Vinaka!

Excellence in Early Childhood Education is our motto which aims to bring forward new direction, new insights and transfer of knowledge, skills and abilities of the people who lead the early childhood field for Fiji in the past, today and tomorrow.

Within a year, we have vigorously worked in pursuing our motto of a well - connected, more involved organization where ideas are shared, relationships are developed and best practices are discovered. This calls for a new vision whereby early childhood educators and professionals continue to be the voices of young children and add value to their work. It calls for rebranding of the Association which offers greater opportunities for growth within the early care and education field, in addition to giving us the opportunity to refresh our direction. Creating strong leaders is the key to building a solid foundation for our young children and ensuring the success of our field. As one of these leaders, your ideas and active participation are welcomed in helping our organization meet its vision.

Our Executive Committee looks forward to continuing our successful and important work together. I invite you to register with FECTA and keep the beacon of hope and light in early childhood education and care alight.

It is with this note, I sincerely thank the CEO - Save the Children Fiji (SCF), Ms Raijeli Nicole for recognizing our contribution in making a difference to the lives of young children and their families by fully funding the 2014 annual conference rapporteur to our doorstep in Labasa – a first of its kind. FECTA has been honoured to welcome a well respected international leader in ECE, Dr Anne Glover who delivered the official keynote address on *Quality Childhood, Quality Future* at the Opening event. On Day Two, Anne delivered another keynote address titled *“Why Research and Its Implications for EC Professionals and Policy Makers/Leaders”* She skillfully set the pace for the other speakers. I salute the emerging researchers and keynote speakers’ presentations - you all did us proud with your innovative evidence based findings. So we can do it after all. I would also like to thank the management committees for investing in their teachers and also the Education Ministry for its support throughout the years. This can only get better.

The release of this report will drive our advocacy for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to newer and greater heights.

I wish you all a prosperous 2015.

Ufemia Camaitoga,

FECTA National President.



FECTA participants assemble at Saint Mary's Primary School, Labasa and march through Labasa Town to the Civic Centre for the formal opening of the 2014 Annual Conference.

1. Inaugural Address, National President of the Fiji Early Childhood Teachers Association (FECTA), Mrs Ufemia Camaitoga, ECCE Consultant.

The formalities commenced with the National President's Inaugural Address, ECE Consultant, Ufemia Camaitoga, who also introduced the Chief Guest, Dr. Anne Glover, Senior Development Specialist Coffey International, ECCE Consultant & Researcher. The National President spoke about the beginnings of FECTA and challenged the teachers to be the voices of children and to champion them in the community and the country. The aim of "A Quality Childhood and A Quality Future," should be the centre-piece of FECTA members and its branches, the National President said. The National President also briefly spoke about the structure of FECTA, and the establishment of executive positions in addition to advancements of the association into research and academia.

2. Quality Childhood, Quality Future, Official Keynote Address & Opening by Dr. Anne Glover, Senior Development Specialist Coffey International, ECCE Consultant & Researcher.



Chief Guest, Dr Anne Glover presenting the keynote address to conference participants

Main Discussion

The official keynote address by Dr. Anne Glover consisted of a 40-year reflection and an insightful historical background of EC education in the Pacific, its progression, current status and the challenges and questions pertaining to achieving its goals.

Reflecting, Dr. Glover noted that in comparison to other Pacific Island Countries (PICs), Fiji is significantly advanced in ECE. She had admiration for the steadfast commitment and leadership of ECE leaders and pioneers, and urged that the journey not stop until every Fijian child, “poor and non-poor, remote, rural and urban has the opportunity to access and benefit from early childhood services.” These, she said “offer cognitive, physical and social stimulation, adequate nutrition, and proper care and nurturing.”

Dr Glover emphasized that history determines the present and future and took the participants through the “internationalization” in 1980 of ECE in the Pacific with the first regional ECE meeting being held in Suva, the recommendations then made and how Fiji and the region currently stand against those recommendations.

She outlined that ECE in Fiji today is a “dynamic enterprise underpinned by the principle that ECE belongs to all children.” “While many of the challenges raised at that first regional workshop remain,

Fiji now has a robust policy¹ and an excellent curriculum, a dedicated workforce and wonderful women leaders.” Importantly she added that there is government commitment to the profession as evidenced in its contribution to teachers’ salaries. Dr. Glover then said that it’s timely that the question is asked of whether ECE services contribute to high quality childhoods for Fiji’s children and why is this important.

Speaking to a captivated audience, the Guest Speaker outlined the importance of the early years in children, considered the most important developmental phase in the lifespan and preparing children for the future where this century is favouring strong problem solvers, thinkers and good communicators, and the role of the EC teacher in all this.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Dr Glover said that throughout Fiji, ECE programs are making (and have made) differences in children's lives. Let it continue. The Vice President (Administration), Ms Aliti Truby summed up the teachers appreciation of the guest speaker’s opening speech, her reflection, her insight into Fiji and the challenges that lay ahead for a quality EC education. It was an inspirational address that has motivated all of the participants to seriously reflect on their profession and the contribution that each could make in obtaining a Quality Future through a Quality Childhood.



Members of FEFTA from the 18 branches across Fiji sing ECE songs during the opening.

¹ Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture & Arts, *Policy in Early Childhood Education*, Fiji

**1. “Why Research and its Implications for EC Professionals and Policy Makers/Leaders”
Keynote Speaker - Dr Anne Glover, Senior Dev Specialist, ECCE Consultant and Researcher.**

Moderator: Mrs Biu Cava/Camaitoga



Main Discussion.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Anne Glover presented the “*My Favourite Book Project*,” a small research project conducted in South Australia to explore what indigenous Australian children choose to read. As she introduced the project, the speaker asked questions of the participants in conducting analysis – breaking down what is meant by “analysis” (which is not confined to the field of science) and thinking about what one has collected (looking for patterns, commonalities etc). The project although small had far-reaching consequences.

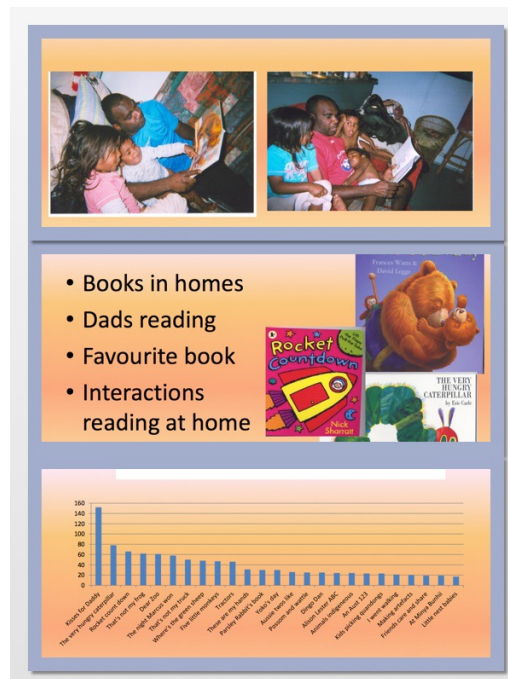
Dr. Glover took the participants through the Research foci, which were to :-

- Gather information about what is read to young Indigenous children by significant others (parents, grandparents, early childhood practitioner, siblings) and who chooses what is read.
- Determine the parameters governing the availability of reading material.
- Examine the perceptions of significant others about why some reading material is favoured by young Indigenous children

Presenting the methodology used – the guest speaker also outlined the innovative method of pairing an Aboriginal researcher with a non-Aboriginal researcher, the number of aboriginal families with

children that were visited and the data collection done by the families and the researchers. These in essence were:-

- Twenty (20) Aboriginal families in a rural Australian setting - 30 children.
- Three (3) home visits.
- My favourite book collection – a box of 25 selected books for 3-6 year old children given to each family.
- Data collection by families and researchers using photographs, a survey sheet, interviews, discussions and a checklist



Main Research Summary

The research summary was as follows:-

- Most families had few children's books in the home and access to children's books was limited.
- Fathers were actively involved in contributing to their children's literacy development and often read aloud to multi-age groups of children in the home - Dads reading .
- Favourite book - books selected most often by the study children promoted child agency and problem solving with a cause-effect narrative structure, rather than books of lists and descriptive captions. Books of a very simple narrative level such as labels, lists and isolated descriptions were rarely chosen.
- Interactions - reading at home - children chose books that promoted social interactions between family members and wider social networks. Books were read at various times, in various places and by a range of 'readers'.

Main Findings/Conclusion

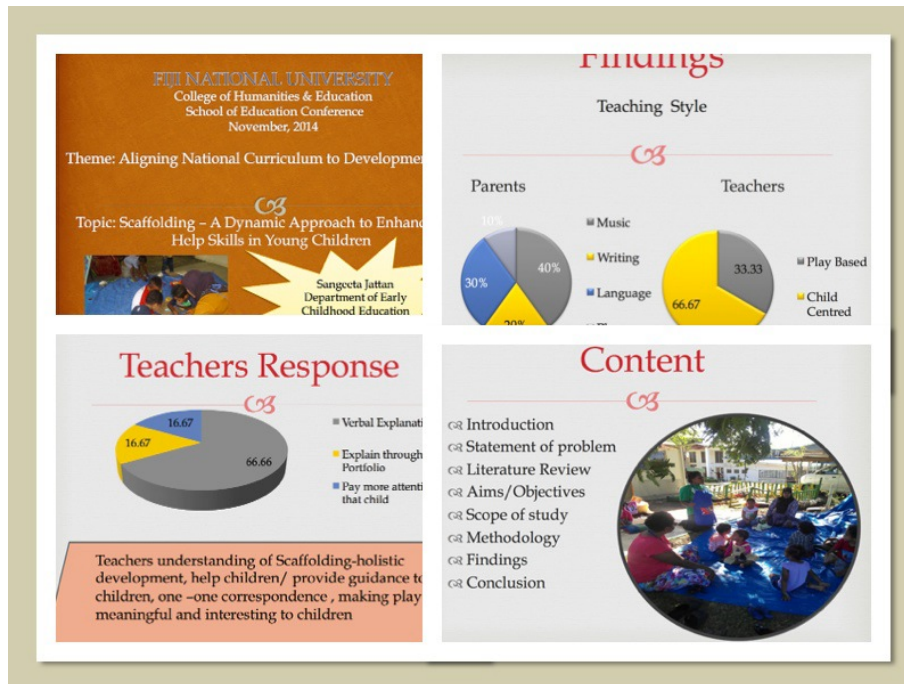
The speaker then posed questions to the participants on whether they have done any research in their centre, which is of interest to the children. A teacher responded outlining a little piece of research that she had conducted to find out why parents are not sending children to school. The lesson learnt is people make lots of assumptions. But when research is conducted and analysis made, it gives the evidence. Without evidence, it is very hard to justify what is being done.

Dr Glover spoke about each area, engaging and conversing with the participants so that they could obtain a quick understanding of each area. Research CAN MAKE a Difference. There is a seven (7)-16% return investment on investing in early childhood. One year of quality preschool can potentially increase a child's earning capacity as an adult by 74 per cent



Dr Anne Glover (top right) presenting the details of the small research project, "My Favourite Book Project" on Day 2 of the conference. Seated bottom right, FEFTA National President, Ufemia Camaitoga.

2. Scaffolding-A Dynamic Approach to Enhance Self Help Skills in Young Children.
Sangeeta Jattan, Department of Early Childhood Education, FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, College of Humanities & Education.



Main Discussion.

FNU researcher and lecturer, Ms. Sangeeta Jattan took the participants through an ECE research piece that aimed to enhance self-help skills in young children through scaffolding. The presenter covered the approach of the research, to findings and the conclusion.

Learning through Play. All he does is play

Key questions in the research approach included:-

- To find out to what extent scaffolding enhances self-help skills in young children
- How will my child be prepared for school if all he does is play?"
- Early childhood education philosophy – young children learn through play. Through observing others behavior.
- Recommended strategy - Plan-Do-Review Cycle which is in Na Noda Mataniciva.
- How effectively teachers can apply it in their centres to promote self-help skills in young children.

Engaging with the participants as she perused each slide, the presenter also covered the literature review, and then presented the findings covering the teaching styles of both teachers and parents, and the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) of parents

Main Findings

These were as follows:-

Teaching Styles

Teachers overwhelmingly favoured “child-centred methodologies” as opposed to play-based.

- 66.67% of teachers use child-centred methodologies.
- 33.33% of teachers are play-based.

Play-based teaching styles were the least used style for parents, with music topping as the most favoured style for teaching.

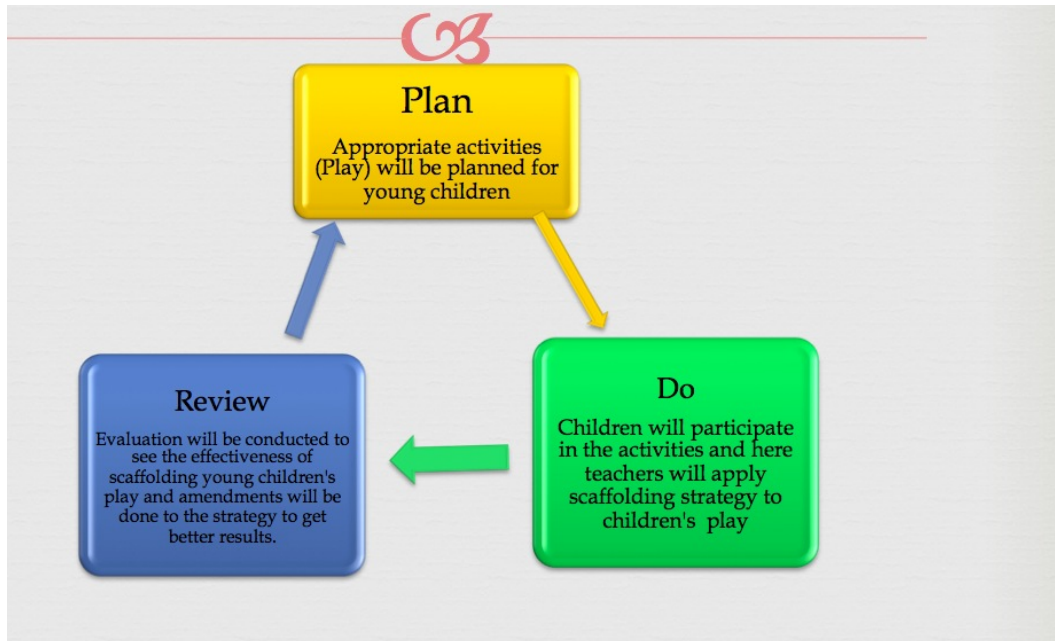
- 40% of parents use music.
- 30% of parents use language.
- 20% write.
- 10% are play-based.

FAQs by Parent

Just over half (57.14%) of parents ask questions on the progress of their children while a significant 42.8% state that they have “no questions” to ask. A significant majority of parents (66.6%) use verbal explanations to explain progress while only 16.67% explain through portfolios.

Conclusion

The speaker concluded that parents needed to understand and then effectively contribute towards their child’s learning and to do that they needed to have information on the teaching style of ECE teachers. Although all teachers state that children do achieve the desired outcomes, teachers need to promote effective scaffolding. This can be done through using the Plan-Do-Review Cycle (Mataniciva 2009). This in turn would strengthen the ECE curriculum - where teachers become confident and competent to apply it to children’s play and enhance self-help skills in young children.



3. Impact of Quality Care on Infants Growth and Development

**Dropati Lal, Department of Early Childhood Education, FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY,
College of Humanities & Education, School of Education Conference**

Theme: Aligning National Curriculum to Development Needs

Main Discussion

The second researcher/presenter, Dropati Lal spoke on the area of the impact of quality care on infants' growth and development. She took the participants through the main objectives of the study which included:-

- For parents/ child carers to know the importance of breast-feeding and brain development.
- For parents to take responsibility of caring for their own children to understand their growth and development.
- For child carers and parents to understand the importance of quality care (parental support, involvement, breastfeeding and healthy environment) for appropriate growth and development in infants.

A glimpse of the literature review was also presented, (Benjamin, 1903-1998).- where again, improper care at first year will lead to major growth problems later in life for the child, such as

lack of brain development, stress, unexpected behavior, not concentrating, physically unfit and being emotionally disturbed.

Findings

The findings saw that 60% of child-carers (the greatest majority) were “prepared.” However the proportion of “well-prepared” and “not prepared” were both 40% respectively.

Parents who are “well prepared” support infant’s growth and development better than those who are not prepared, while infants who are breastfed for a longer period had higher rate of development than infants who are breastfed for few months. This shows that longer breastfed infants had normal brain development that is why they can learn faster. The high rate of parental involvement and a healthy environment are all equally important for infants growth and development.

4. Selina Anthony Prasad – “Quality Childhood, Quality Future,” Teacher-in-Charge – Bethesda Little Stars Learning Centre.

The next presenter came in as a success story and commenced with an interesting display of family support as her, her family and the teachers introduced the presentation with a song.

Main Discussion



Selina Anthony Prasad (left) with teachers of Bethesda Little Stars Learning Centre (Labasa) introduce her success story presentation with a song on FECTA executives’ support to the centre and the teachers.





Selina Anthony Prasad, presented the Bethesda Little Stars Learning Centre - where she is Teacher-in-Charge, her husband – the Finance Manager and where the ongoing conversations between husband and wife culminated in an ECE Learning Centre with an enrolment of some 60 children.

“To fulfil this passion and dream I saw the need for ongoing conversations and prayers between my husband David and I to establish an early childhood centre with a special touch.”

- Selina Anthony Prasad.

The presenter drew responses of admiration from the audience as she made comparisons of the time when she had established the learning centre to its current stage. A real-life story of helping a needy, marginalised child to write and to read his own name, and the determination and sacrifice in commencing full-time studies at the FNU’s Lautoka campus, all added to the flavor of the presenters success.

She introduced a point in reflection, with the apt question – Lets take time to reflect and ask ourselves = “ Am I really called to be part and parcel of a Child’s Learning Development – or is it out of duty that I’m teaching so to get the job done? This drew engagement from the teachers

<p>OUR MISSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To facilitate and foster the growth and development of young children physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually in a happy, safe and nurturing environment that encourages individuality, self discovery, cooperation, inquiry and respect for others and their surroundings, through developmentally appropriate programmes. 	<p>CHILDREN'S WORK</p> 	<p>A SNEAK PREVIEW OF THE IN ENVIRONMENT</p> 
<p>OUR BELIEFS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young children are active and natural learners. They are constantly learning through observing, exploring, discovering, investigating, imagining, knowledge acquiring and sharing Children are inquisitive by nature. Young children are naturally intrigued with the world around them. We believe in the holistic development of the whole child and our program is tailored to draw out the full potential of our children in every aspect 	<p>HAPPY! HEALTHY! TEC</p> 	<p>MANNERS TREE DRA</p> 

Main Findings

The lessons learnt from this success story are that:-

- It is up to the ECE teacher to make it work
- A responsive teacher is one who responds to the needs of the child – interacts, influences, instructs, praises and encourages.
- It's all about sacrifice – where there's a will there's a way.
- Must have a passion for ones work.

5. Na Noda Mataniciva – Part A - (Beginners, Teacher In Charge & Branch Presidents Facilitators) – Sangeeta Jattan.

FNU researcher and lecturer, Ms. Sangeeta Jattan then conducted a workshop session presenting the ECE curriculum guideline, *Na Noda Mataniciva(NNM) – Part A* – for Beginners, Teacher In Charge & Branch Presidents. Using the fish pond discussion model of extracting information, questions were discussed and these ranged from opinions about NNM; the difference it has made to the ECE teachers work; and the segment of NNM in which the teacher finds the most comfortable to use.

Responses were positive across the board and included the following quotes:-

“What do you think of NNM?”

- Excellent guideline. Before no guideline. From 2009.
- Very easy to follow. Good for programme planning.
- Makes it easy for teachers. The use of the 5ws etc and the use of scaffolding.

What difference has NNM done in your life as an ECE teacher?

- Has been very helpful especially when we have to prepare activities for the children.
- Difference? By working together with the children – we encourage the children to come up with their own ideas. NNM is not new as the principles have been there the last 10 years.

Name an activity or a part of NNM that you are most comfortable to use and tell us why?

- Physical Development and Health and Well-being. Through observing kids, it builds up their physical skills and motor skills. There are also lots of outdoor activities.
- Have learnt a lot – all are useful. Will go back and teach them - so useful.
- Doing activities into strands, sub-strands and outcomes. What the children will learn from you.

The workshop instructor kept the teachers engaged as she carefully paced herself ensuring space for clarity with the audience. The importance of good relationships with all the various stakeholders, having a child-centred learning, and the effective use of NNM were produced. The participants then came forward with 1 minute presentations on using NNM effectively and the strategies they used for success.

Conclusion

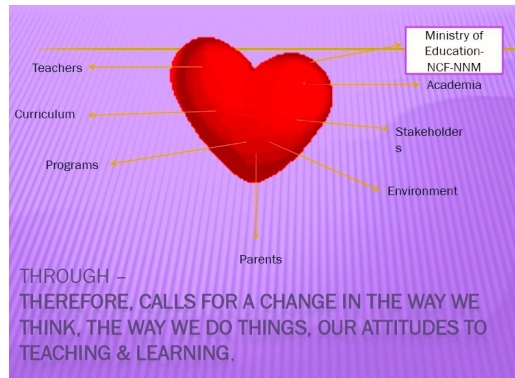
Participants agreed that in order to effectively use NNM – one has to be familiar with the guidelines and the child-centred curriculum development framework, which comprises of five components.



FNU lecturer and researcher, Sangetta Jattan (standing right) engaging with participants on their experience with the ECE curriculum guideline, Na Noda Mataniciva (NNM) during the first workshop session on Day 2.

1. Keynote Speaker - Ufemia Camaitoga, FECTA President and ECE Consultant
'Na Noda Mataniciva – The Heart Beat of Early Childhood Education In Fiji' (Research)

Moderator: Mrs Biu Cava



Main Discussions.

The keynote speaker emphasized how like a heart-beat, the *Na Noda Mataniciva (NNM)*– the national kindergarten curriculum guideline for 3-6 year olds, ought to be pulsating, pumping, alive and breathing. Therefore NNM should not be left on the bookshelf but brought out 'alive' and used to its maximum effect. Mrs. Camaitoga took the participants through the key roles that each stakeholder plays in keeping the "heartbeat" (NNM) alive and pulsating - from parents, programs, curriculum, teachers, academia, stakeholder and the environment. Examples of how each stakeholder played a part in keeping the heartbeat pumping kept the participants engaged and responsive. The background to NNM was also provided where ECE educators yearned for connectivity between their practice and NNM. A glimpse of how the FNU has progressed with NNM was also presented ..

Conclusion

Status update revealed that not a single research on ECE has been conducted, which captures the holistic development of children in Fiji. The participants agreed that more research is required in the field of ECE. There is one research in this area – (which could act as a baseline) – but with no other research for comparisons or to benchmark against. Strict monitoring is also required for the betterment of the practicing teachers, and teacher trainees in both ECE and primary programs. FECTA could perhaps champion the monitoring of ECE. This was welcomed

2. Keynote Speaker- Analesi Tuicaumia Global Leader, Director of Little Ones Learning Centre, *A Success Story & Experiences*, Moderator: Mrs. Biu Cava

World Forum for Early Care and Education Puerto Rico 2014

Analesi Tuicaumia
Global Leader-Fiji



Global Leaders - Project

Launch Global Leaders new Project to mentor emerging GL across the globe.

Eg. Analesi > Shifa, Abu Dhabi



Global Leader Mentees

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Shifa Alhashmi
@shifasa | active 1 month, 1 week ago

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Basic Info

First/Given Name	Shifa
Last/Family Name	Alhashmi
Country	United Arab Emirates
City	Abu Dhabi
Bio	Other
Position/Role	about mentors
Organization's Website	

Global Leaders – Fiji Project

- Kindy@the Park 2010
 - Identify the need for national advocacy work in Fiji
 - Target group were parents, EC educators, Public, government, and children 2-5-year olds
 - Showcase quality ECE programme



The 2nd keynote speaker Mrs. Analesi Tuicaumia made an interesting and enthusiastic presentation of her learning centre – *Little Ones Learning Centre* a success story, which has gone global as it networks and brings back lessons for adaptation and implementation in Fiji.

The presenter provided an overall presentation on ‘owning and investing in a centre’ and took participants to the World Forum Foundation, her work in mentoring an ECE individual in Saudi Arabia, advocacy campaigns, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) and their connection to ECE and the national scene.

On national advocacy work, she presented photographs of activities that included “Kindy @ the Park” – with the theme of ***Climate Change is Real – I have the Right to Know*** – an activity which obtained an award for the most creative and which has now further progressed into the inclusion of early childhood in next years career expo. The advocacy was also for the region – everyone’s voice.’



**Teroro Natei
Mobile kindy**



Responses from the participants as she presented was of keen interest and this continued as the next slide of pictures were displayed which centred on the “Mobile Kindy” – ‘box it up and take it out’ – Emergency Education – A great tool to use in going out the disadvantaged. She explained that this is an initiative in which a high quality ECE program is ‘boxed-up’ or put into boxes, taken out into the neighborhood and taught and provided to needy children who do not have the opportunity like many other young children to have an ECE education. The shocking finding is that the children of the mobile kindy mostly stay with individuals other than their parents – e.g. grandparents, neighbours and other family/community members. Children were even signing their own official documents and taking themselves to the mobile kindy. 23 children have graduated from the mobile kindy, which included also children with disability

Major Findings

- That when children **access** ECE that it is essential that they are provided with **quality** ECE.
- The quality of that moment – enjoying that minute/second at that time – can actually make the difference. It is important that in teaching that child – you stay with them – connect with them.
- It is up to the educators that much of those rights, of CRC would be accessed by children.
- Little Ones has been used as a quality assurance for providing ECE to the disadvantaged.



Mr. Tuicaumia also shared his views on the work they do as a couple, in that every issue is a management issue. Over the years – he has been doing a lot of work with the presenter that now includes planning out progressing the Learning Centre to Class 1 in order that child transition is measured and training institutionalised. The moderator, Mrs. Biu Cava summed up that the lessons learnt included bringing back what one has learnt from travels and networking to implement with passion and compassion for children

3. Keynote Speaker:-Positive Discipline (Part A) - Mere Krishna, Save the Children Fiji (SCF).

Positive Discipline

Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching
GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATORS- Joan Durant

Objectives

- Teachers will understand the concept of Discipline
- Practice and share

Save the Children

- Save the Children is the world's leading independent organisation for Children

Our Vision : is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation

Our Mission : is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children ,and to achieve immediate and lasting changes in their lives

Main Discussion.

Mere Krishna of SCF then took the ECE educators through engraining “Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching.” These included guidelines for educators, reporting on violence against children, recommendations, alignment with the Convention on the Rights of the Child(CRC), local examples that are not in conformity with the CRC, and the principles of Positive Discipline.

The educators agreed with the recommendations which included the importance of:-

- Prohibiting violence in schools, including corporal punishment
- Training & supporting school staff in the use of non violent approaches to teaching & classroom management
- Revising curricula to model non- violent conflict resolution.
- Implementing violence prevention programmes for all school staff
- Establishing codes of conduct based on child rights principles.

In discussing the CRC, the presenter connected *Positive Discipline* to Children’s Rights to healthy development, protection from violence and participation in their learning. The slide below:- My Job

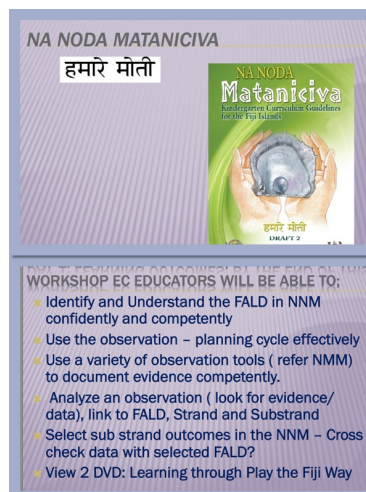
is to teach, not to discipline “ and other pertinent quotes resonated well with the ECE educators who understood the challenges surrounding these.

Introduction

“My job is to teach , not to discipline “

“ I have to complete the curriculum :
I don't have time for positive discipline “

4. Workshop Groups, Na Noda Mataniciva Parts B&C (Beginners, Teacher In Charge & Branch Presidents), Sangeeta Jattan, Fiji National University (FNU).



NA NODA MATANICIVA
हमारे मोती

NA NODA
Mataniciva
Assessment Competence Guidelines
for the Fiji Islands
हमारे मोती
CHAPTER 2

WORKSHOP EC EDUCATORS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Identify and Understand the FALD in NNM confidently and competently
- Use the observation – planning cycle effectively
- Use a variety of observation tools (refer NMM) to document evidence competently.
- Analyze an observation (look for evidence/ data), link to FALD, Strand and Substrand
- Select sub strand outcomes in the NNM – Cross check data with selected FALD?
- View 2 DVD: Learning through Play the Fiji Way

Main Discussion

The workshop aimed to get the EC Educators to competently identify and understand Foundation Areas of Learning and Development, (FALD) – where they effectively use the planning cycle, use a variety of observation tools, analyse the observation and understand the principles and methods through “Learning through Play the Fiji Way.” The presenter noted that graduates of the FNU in 2012, 2013 and 2014 have done NNM in their units and can offer assistance. She also took the educators through the three parts of the FALD, - breaking them down so that the educators could identify and understand them competently.

The structure of FALD, the unpacking of outcomes, Topic of Inquiry were some of the areas she presented and continued to respond to questions as each topic within the slide was presented. Emphasis on providing the child with holistic development so that he or she is “very strong” was the theme. Special focus was also on how to design a community calendar, choosing a topic that focuses on a specific outcome and what is important at that time. These topics were combined with examples e.g. the topic being the rainy season and the personal development learning being on the importance of children knowing about floods and how to safely cross the river. The methodology of scaffolding the child was also discussed.

Teacher responses came particularly from those that had attended previous workshops who engaged and helped deconstruct the session. Some teachers also came forward with their story telling on their “Topic of Inquiry” – where the students were involved in the choice of the topic. The range of topics included the themes of Christmas, a newborn baby, and the fascinating familiar occurrence of funerals. Such story telling on the “Topic of Inquiry” – and how that is done in real-life situations in learning centres, drew positive reactions, engagement and similar examples from the participants.



SCF's Ruth Kuilamu (left) and participants at the 2nd NNM workshop session



Sangetta Jattan of the FNU conducting the 2nd NNM workshop

5. Environmental Sustainability

Facilitators: Truby, Sangita Singh, Ranadi, Rarako.

The conference then broke up to view the work of the four groups on Environmental Sustainability.

Teachers view the gallery walk on Environmental Sustainability where creative pieces made from recycled containers, cartons and material are displayed as Learning Centre art and decorations.



1. Opportunities at Teacher Education Institutions.

Main Discussions.

The institutions of FNU and Methodist Lay Teachers Training Centre (MLTC), also made presentations on the opportunities that are available for ECE teacher training. Insight provided from the MLTC representative particularly spoke about her professional development that commenced with the institution and then her continuance to the University of the South Pacific with encouragement along the way by the FECTA President.

Mrs Biu Cava speaking on behalf of the FNU provided further insight into course availability in the various divisional centres, drawing questions from the participants on distance learning availability and course requirements. Sangeeta Jattan also of the FNU further spoke of scholarship availability, encouraging participants to continue to apply for ECE scholarships through the Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Scheme (TSLS).

Ms Jattan then produced a pictorial of the FNU ECE teacher training covering the training program and the activities that trainees conduct with the children at the institute.



The pictorial presentation drew enthusiastic queries from the participants on the course programme and the role that FECTA could also possibly play in the monitoring and evaluation of ECE education in the country. Main lessons from the FNU ECE presentation included:-

- The need to get out of ones comfort zone e.g. inviting disadvantaged children to participate in ECE week.
- Constantly being creative
- Utilising partnerships and networks such as Save the Children's Fund (SCF), as well as parents

Main Findings

The FECTA President emphasized the importance of such development including the need to constantly upgrade and upskill in ECE and to keep abreast of educational progress in the ECE educational arena. Common themes running throughout the presentations were the strengthening of partnerships that are in place and that could be further utilized, or new ones that could be explored.

2. Positive Discipline – Save the Children Fiji (SCF). – *Improving Behaviour Management Strategies in the EC Centre*

SCF's Mere Krishna took participants through the theory of Positive Discipline (PD) in relation to improving behavior management strategies in the EC Centre.

Main Discussion. The presenter covered areas such as the objectives of PD, SCF's vision and work, and PD in everyday teaching. Breaking down areas of PD into possible scenarios helped to engage the audience as they examined what "is" and "is not" Positive Discipline.

Positive Discipline <i>Is Not</i>	Positive Discipline <i>Is</i>
X letting children do whatever they want	✓ helping children develop self-control over time
X having no rules	✓ communicating clearly
X quick reactions to situations	✓ respecting children and earning their respect
X punishments other than hitting and shouting	✓ teaching children how to make good decisions
	✓ building children's skills and confidence
	✓ teaching children respect for other people's feelings

Being a positive role model or role modeling to the child clearly emerged as a key factor in PD. In talking about abuse -participants understood the various areas from physical, social, emotional and verbal abuse – signifying familiarity across the board.

3. FECTA RESTRUCTURE AND NEW DIRECTIONS.

The participants also discussed the corporate profile, stakeholder engagement, upcoming activities and the financial summary of FECTA. Vice-President (Administration), Aliti Truby provided an introductory overview to the association with its beginnings from a passionate, brainstorming session in the Nausori Branch before the participants discussed the association as it is.



Quality Education Quality Future

Members agreed in principle to the adoption of the FECTA logo and tagline. The logo symbolizes the tagline *Excellence in Early Childhood Education*, where a smiling child centred in the middle reaches and jumps towards excellence. Members also were taken through the structure of FECTA (Appendix 2), which distinguishes the National Executives from the Branch Executives and the voting rights as in line with the association's constitution. General Treasurer, Savitri..., presented the financial summary (Appendix 3), outlining conference expenses, and association establishment and visitation costs. FECTA now has an opening balance of **\$26,692.87**. The conference concluded with the last event, the FECTA Awards Night - where awards were presented to encourage branch and individual excellence (Appendix 4).

4. SWOT SUMMARY

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) was also conducted of the conference. This was done on an individual participant basis where each individual was required to conduct his or her own SWOT of the conference. The following findings summarized the SWOT and participants views of the conference and its objectives. On *Strengths*, the top areas were:-

1. Professional development
2. The ECE resource guide - *Na Noda Mataniciva(NNM)*
3. Conference organisation,
4. Socialization/networking,
5. FECTA
6. The executive
7. And research.

Weaknesses centred around the organization and logistics of the conference.

Opportunities were seen in the:-

1. Networking that could be further exploited with other partners such as SCF and with resource people that presented
2. Researchers
3. And the potential for more similar workshops.

Threats largely revolved around accommodation, and logistical issues, which could further hinder the maximum success of the conference. See Appendix 5 for the full SWOT.

Appendix 1 - QUALITY CHILDHOOD, QUALITY FUTURE: Opening Address – by Dr Anne, Glover

Introduction

When I first came to Fiji more than three decades ago, I was overwhelmed by its beauty - the blue water, the lush foliage, the ever-present smell of frangipani, tiare and mokosoi - and the friendliness of the people I encountered. But, as an early childhood educator, I was most overwhelmed by what was happening here in early childhood education under the leadership of a group of remarkable women, women whose commitment knew no bounds. Foremost was the visionary Vasu Tuivaga, who had a grand vision not only for Fiji's children but for children of the Pacific more broadly.

Since those early days, I have been in and out of Fiji, including time spent at USP in the mid-1990s (1996/97) writing the Diploma of Early Childhood Education. And, in that time, my admiration for the leadership and commitment to ECE by Fijian women has not wavered. So, I am delighted to be here this evening and am privileged to be joining you on another step in the journey to ensuring that all Fijian children have the best early childhood possible ... a journey that should not stop until every child - poor and non-poor, remote, rural and urban - has the opportunity to access and benefit from **quality** early childhood services that offer cognitive, physical, and social stimulation, adequate nutrition, and proper care and nurturing.²

History determines our present and our future

Fiji's formal journey towards the provision of high quality ECE services started in the 1930s with the establishment of the first kindergartens, and grew steadily through the 1960s and 70s. August 1980 saw the beginning of the journey's 'internationalisation' with the **first regional ECE meeting** held in Suva. Early childhood educators from the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Pohnpei, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa, New Zealand and Australia joined forces with Fijian early childhood leaders to share ideas about ECE. Topics discussed by the meeting participants included:

- relevance of child development theories for Pacific Island people
- place of culture, values and traditions in pre-school education
- how to deal with western as well as traditional practices
- lack of research on Pacific Island children, their families and situations.³

Many problems identified at the meeting mostly related to lack of funding, and including:

² Young ME 2007, *Early Child Development From Measurement to Action. A Priority for Growth and Equity*, World Bank, Washington DC

³ Toganivalu, D 2008, *Early Childhood Care and Education in the Pacific: Reflections of our past, our present and our future*, in Puamau, P & Pene, F (Eds), *Early Childhood Care and Education in the Pacific: The PRIDE Project*, Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific.

- low wages for the teachers, or use volunteers
- high cost of equipment
- difficulty in collecting fees from parents
- burdensome fund-raising activities to meet costs
- limited training opportunities for teachers.⁴

In response, a number of recommendations were made. These included:

- use of local, inexpensive materials be encouraged, and people involved in ECCE be trained in how to make teaching aids
- written materials for Pacific pre-school teachers be created and shared
- the writing of children's books using the writers' own Pacific backgrounds and languages be encouraged
- more learning about child development patterns in the Pacific take place
- a Pacific Pre-school Teacher Training Course be established
- a regional Pre-school Council be established.⁵

Among the achievements that followed the meeting were the:

- 1) establishment of the Pacific Pre-school Council, tasked to follow up on the workshop recommendations and to actively support the member countries
- 2) development of the Pacific Pre-school Certificate Course at USP's Continuing Education in 1982, followed by the Diploma Course in ECE in 1997 and the BEd in ECE in 2006, with emphasis on creating Pacific courses, tailored to the Pacific context
- 3) development of a non-formal ECCE project (1992–1997) at USP to strengthen the national ECCE associations in their organisational structure and advocacy through the production of materials, including a trainer's manual, a toy-making handbook, brochures and posters, and plays and videos for advocacy and training.⁶

ECE in Fiji today

Building on this rich local and regional heritage, ECE in Fiji today is a dynamic enterprise underpinned by the principle that ECE belongs to all children. While many of the challenges raised at that first regional workshop remain, Fiji now has a **robust policy**⁷ and **an excellent curriculum**, a **dedicated workforce** and **wonderful women leaders**. And importantly, there is government commitment to the profession as evidenced in its contribution to teachers' salaries. So, is it timely to ask – are our services contributing to high quality childhoods for Fiji's children and why is this important.

The ECE environment is one of the four key environments in which children grow, live and learn. Of course, the family environment is the most intimate and pervasive, followed by residential communities (eg neighbourhoods) and relational communities (eg those based on religious or other social bonds). So, if ECE is to make a positive contribution to children's healthy development, it must

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ministry of Education, National Heritage, *Culture & Arts, Policy in Early Childhood Education*, Fiji

be of high quality - only a high quality nurturing ECE service will improve outcomes for children. A poor quality service will add to children's stress

Participation in high quality ECE increases the chances of good outcomes for marginalised children. A UK study showed that two years of high quality ECE gave a child the same advantage as a mother with a university education.⁸

The importance of the early years

The early childhood period is considered the most important developmental phase in the lifespan. What happens to the child in these early years is critical for her **developmental trajectory and life-course** – i.e. what happens in the first years of life strongly influences children's physical health, for example, whether they are obese or stunted, their likelihood of having heart disease, as well as their mental health and well-being. It influences their language and cognitive development and thus their competence in literacy and numeracy; and their social and emotional development including their later engagement in criminal activity and their economic participation throughout life.

We need to create strong children – strong in every development area – so that they can have strong futures.

Preparing children for the future

We do not know the future, so how can we prepare our children for it? How will we prepare them for this unknown place, a place not yet created. What do you think it will look like? What will children need?

While we cannot know the future, we know that *global interdependency is posing formidable challenges for future generations and society. So, maximizing the human potential is more important and necessary than ever before.*⁹

We also know that already this century is *increasingly favouring individuals who are intellectually flexible, skilled in problem solving, emotionally resilient, and well able to interact with others in constantly changing social environments and highly competitive economies.*¹⁰ It is likely therefore that we should be helping children become **strong problem solvers, thinkers and good communicators.**

We maximise children's potential by making sure that their early experiences positively support their body, brain and behavioural development – the three Bs!

⁸ Sylva K, Melhuish E, Sammons P, Sira-Blachford I & Taggart B, 2010, *Early Childhood Matters; evidence from the Effective Pre-school and Primary Education Project*, Routledge, London

⁹ Young ME 2007, *Early Child Development From Measurement to Action. A Priority for Growth and Equity*, World Bank, Washington DC

¹⁰ *ibid*

- Bodies: adequate nutrition and good hygiene; opportunities for rest, sleep and comfort; opportunities provided for physical play that involve fine and gross motor skills
- Brains: activities that stimulate the sensing pathways - seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting; positive interactions with others
- Behaviour: activities to develop social skills – learning to share, take turns, cooperate, to have positive peer interactions; activities for emotional development – expressing feeling in acceptable ways.

The role of the early childhood teacher

What is the role of early childhood teachers in contributing to high quality childhoods for children?
 What principles should underpin early childhood teaching?

- 1) Respect the whole child - all areas of development and learning are important
- 2) Honour every child and his/her gift(s) - start with each child's existing knowledge and skills and build from these. "Babies are born with both hands closed – hanging onto a gift that they have – that they bring with them to our world. Some learn their gift – some go their whole lives and never know their gift."
- 3) Listen to children – don't be afraid to raise difficult topics that may be affecting children. As Martin Luther King said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."
- 4) Recognise that parents and family members are the children's first teachers
- 5) Value the learning environment – always pay attention to detail
- 6) Being proactive – share our knowledge – KPS = knowing, practising, sharing

In conclusion, throughout Fiji, ECE programs are making (and have made) differences in children's lives, let it long continue!

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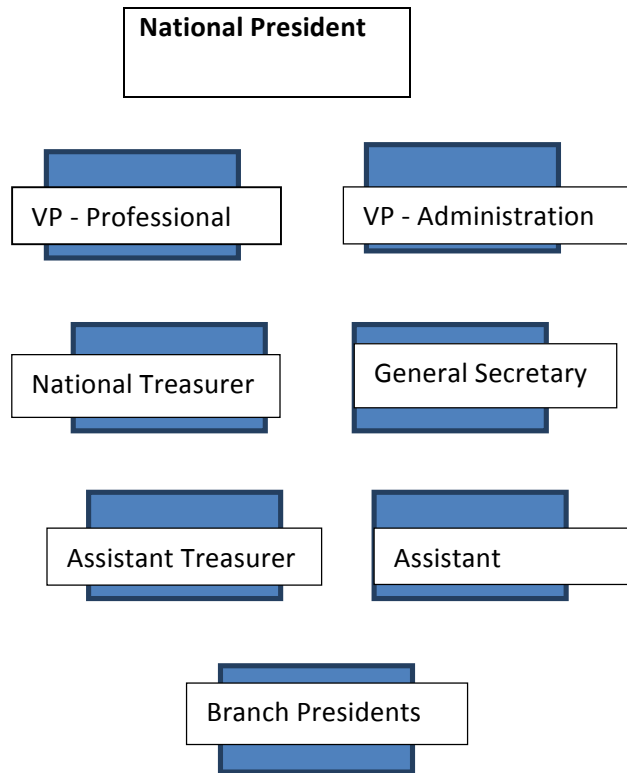
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Appendix 2 – FEFTA EXECUTIVE STRUCTURE



Appendix 3 - FECTA FINANCIAL REPORT 2014**Bank Account – BSP Bank****Bank Account Number – 10389083 (Cheque account).****Bank Account Fee - \$250-.****TOTAL EXPENSES OF THE CONFERENCE**

	EXPENDITURE ITEMS	\$
1	Laminating Machine	150
2	Certificates for the conference	500
3	Stationery	4,455
4	Receipt books	356
5	Air fares (officials)	1205.20
6	Rental car	1951.83
7	Two pigs	360
8	Rental fuel	100
9	Mats and masi (opening ceremony)	320
10	Data projector	980
		10,378.03
	Hosting Branch	25,713.00
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	36,091.03

BREAKDOWN FOR CONFERENCE EXPENSES FOR**HOSTING BRANCH, LABASA.**

	EXPENDITURE ITEMS	\$
1	Food money	13,200
2	Accommodation deposit	500
3	Saint Mary	1,780
4	Kitchen	320
5	Civic Centre	317
6	Chair	300
7	Sound system	600
8	Extra food money	2483

9	Accommodation refund	1,000
10	Accommodation for 5 extra room	1,400
11	Meal for extra teachers	113
12	Meals for Thursday dinner	3,700
		25,713.00

MINOR EXPENSES

1	Reimbursement to Ufemia	256.70
2	Travel to Labasa	553.00
3	Visitation to Truby	150.00
4	Transport to E/M (Suva – Nadi, Oct)	200.00
5	Transport to E/M Suv- Ltk	500
		\$1659.70

Opening Balance FECTA = \$26,692.87

Appendix 4 –Awards Recipients

FECTA Annual Awards Night 2014

Venue: Friendly Northern Inn Date: 4/12/14

1. **President's Award for Overall Excellence:** Nausori Branch
2. **Na Noda Mataniciva:** Lautoka Branch
3. **Research In ECE:** Sangeeta Jattan & Dropati Lal
4. **Best Organised:** Lautoka Branch
5. **Most Farthest Award:** Kadavu Branch
6. **Inclusive Awards:** Truby Aliti, Ana
7. **Best Cultural Item:** Rabi
8. **Best Dressed:** Nausori
9. **Entrepreneurship Award:** Bethesda Learning Centre
10. **Best Graphic Design Award:** Igenasio Baletasere
11. **Best Entertainment Award:** Kioa
12. **Host Branch:** Labasa
13. **In Appreciation:** Taveuni

Appendix 5 – SWOT ANALYSIS OF 2014 CONFERENCE**Fiji Early Childhood Teachers' Association Conference 2014****Summary of the evaluation****Strengths****Professional Development**

- more workshops needed
- good facilitators
- good presentations/ excellent presentations
- learnt some principles of quality early childhood
- child is our priority
- refresher training
- resourceful
- speakers were very professional
- better understanding of holistic development of a child
- learnt different teaching techniques
- the education level of ECE to more forward

Personal Development

- Inspired by Truby's personal presentation
- very challenging and very encouraging conference
- workshop topics were interesting and informative
- professionally developed as an EC educator
- able to be more disciplined
- opportunity for public speaking
- never lose hope

Success Story

- empowerment and strengthen capacity building through **Success Story**
- skills and knowledge delivered was enriching
- learnt new songs
- good speakers

Sustainability

- gained some skills of sustainability development in EC environment
- topics were easy to understand

Positive Discipline/Behaviour Management

- enhance knowledge on behavior management
- positive discipline and rights of child well explained

Na Noda Mataniciva (NNM)

- upgrade knowledge on Na Noda Mataniciva
- all the areas of FALD were covered well
- More workshops needed
- renew my knowledge of Na Noda Mataniciva
- clear view of NNM
- useful
- Plan-Do-Review cycle well understood
- knowledge on preparation of workbook

Conference Organisation

- Good food even though it was late
- cheap conference levy
- friendly host
- getting certificate at the end of the conference
- items were staged well
- opening was good
- speakers were on time
- successful conference
- good media coverage
- good venue
- Chief Guest speaker was very good

Socialization

- meeting new teachers
- lot of teachers participated in the conference
- able to share my personal feelings
- learnt so many songs in different cultures
- new learners attended e.g student teachers
- met some old friends

FECTA

- FECTA has international link opportunities
- increased FECTA members- fast development
- recognized
- support from the management
- proud to be member of FECTA

Executive Membership

- office bearers relationship good

- good teamwork
- transparency (financial summary - healthy bank balance)
- good team to move ECE forward
- come to know all the executive members
- well-presented financial report

Research

- gained knowledge on how to do research
- gained good knowledge of scaffolding- matching their practice to theory
- Dynamic approach to research
- eye opening- data presented by researchers
- encouragement to do research
- quality research thinkers

Academia

- FNU excellent
- upgrades of the educational streams

Gender

- increase involvement of male teachers

Weaknesses

Organization /Logistics

- accommodation
- late and poor catering
- time management
- venue was overcrowded
- lack of participation
- communication breakdown
- conference very expensive
- noticed some differences amongst teachers

Handouts / Resources

- resources not provided e.g CDs to inform communities
- no handouts were given
- lack outdoor resources in schools
- practice what you have learnt

MOE-ECE Office

- MOE issues were not addressed because of absence of MOE –ECE officer

Opportunities

Networking

- amongst the preschool teachers
- evidence based learning
- conduct more workshops e.g Na Noda Mataniciva
- Save the Children Fiji –Positive Discipline Strategies
- with NGOs e.g Analesi and Mrs Camaitoga
- perform in front of a big crowd

Funding

- look for funders for conference

Qualification

- continue further studies
- great to be aware of programmes offered by universities
- received certificates

Threat

- safety- not good
 - room keys not provided
 - toilet facility not good
 - transportation at night
 - smell of new paint – not good
 - teachers not taking conference seriously
-

In Pictures – The FECTA 2014 Annual Conference, Labasa, Dec 1 – 4.





Save the Children
Fiji

