

# Education **as** sustainable development

## Transformative education on Mangaia



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**idc2012**



# Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

- Evolved out of Agenda 21 (Rio Summit)
- Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014 )
- **Descriptive** not prescriptive

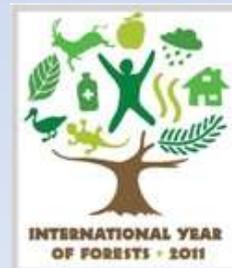
## But in the Cook Islands

- Focus on environmental education
- Little integration into the curriculum

Weeks



Years



Projects e.g.  
sandwatch

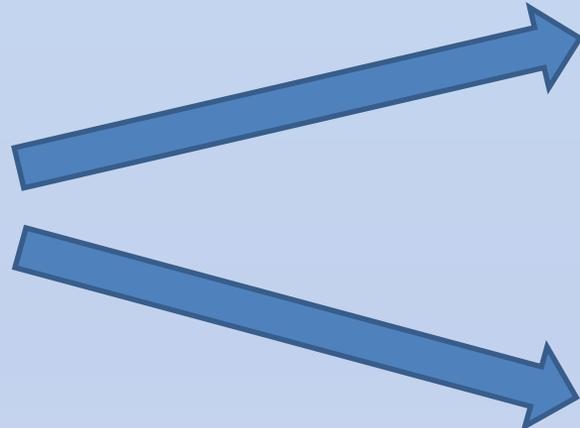


# Education in the Cook Islands

Focus on supporting economic development

Western academic achievement

binary curriculum



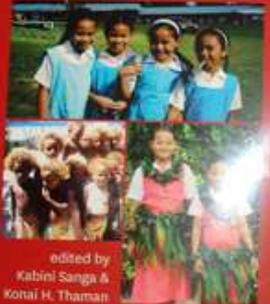
Cook Island Maori

- Taught as a separate subject
- Culture is a relic

• Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative (RPEI)

• Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE)

Re-thinking Education  
Curricula in the Pacific:  
Challenges and Prospects



# Integrating research, policy and practice

*Te oraanga tu rangatira kia tau ki te anoano o te iti tangata e kia tau ki ta tatou peu Maori e te aotini taporoporoia o te basileia.*

NSDP vision

## Ministry currently focussed on:

- Determining how a transformative ESD might support NSDP vision?
- Increased participation by parents in decision making
- Concerned about current student achievement results on the outer islands

*Uriuri manako* - Ministry of Education

**Initial analysis of NCEA achievement information indicates that students achieve best in two subjects:**

- **Maori**
- **Tourism (a place based education course)**

**Pacific researchers say...**

- **There is a shortage of relevant literature on indigenous education in the Pacific.** (Teaero 1999)
- **Indigenous pedagogy should also be explored before it is lost and it is too late.** (Sanga (2009))

## Key questions:

- How do **Mangaians** conceptualise sustainable development?
- What skills and knowledge do **Mangaians** consider are important for endogenous sustainable development?
- How does **schooling** support or not support this vision?
- How might the **community** in conjunction with Ministry of Education and aid agencies best support any curriculum changes required?
- **How might this link to academic success?**

# Methodology

- **Qualitative research is best suited to capturing the diversity of views on SD**
  - **Seeks to understand people and their activities in context by understanding peoples thinking, feelings and lived experiences** (Ary, 2006).
  - **Use semi structured interviews**
- **Critical research framework**
  - **Rejects the entrenched assumptions** e.g. economic determinism and technical rationality
  - **Suspicious of linguistic and discursive powers**
  - **Investigates relationships between culture and power** (J.L. Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002)
- **Case study method allows ... “investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events”** (Yin 1990)

- **Research morals, values and ethics**

- **Listen to pacific methodologies**

- **The aim is to develop a partnership, not just extract information**

  - sit down, listen and learn (Chambers, 1983)

  - avoid strategic silencing (Nabobo-Baba 2004)

- **Be reflexive**

- **Form advisory group**

- **Acknowledge positionality**

- **Build relationships**

- **Participate in uipaanga**

- **Use talanoa**

- **Respect language**

- **Ethics**

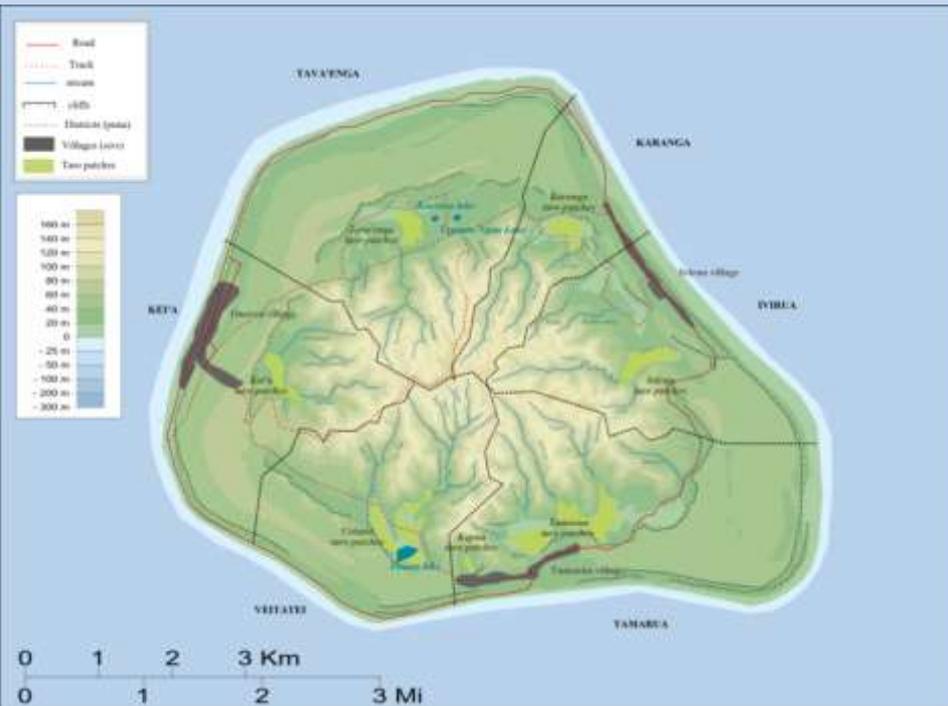


**distinguish between a “celebration of indigenous knowledge and an appropriation”**

**operate between the “ethical absolutist and the situational relativist”**

**(Glesne 2006)**

# Mangaia



- Six puna headed by pava and ui rangitira
- No land court

# Initial findings: Sustainable development on Mangaia

*Aroaro'a / aroa taeake*



*Te ipukarea ia rangarangatu (rangatira)*



*Oraanga/akonoanga enua*



*Kimi i te oraanga meitaki / matutu / rangarangatu no te Mangaia*

*Whilst*

*akono akaperepere ma te taporoporo i te ipukarea*

economic

Agriculture  
Tourism  
Small business  
MIRAB

Social

Government  
Island council  
Social welfare  
Hyperreality

Environment

Climate change  
Loss of Habitat  
Herbicides  
Conservation  
Sustainable energy



## SD “Mangaian style “ illustrates the importance of:

- **Indigenous epistemology**

“cultural group's ways of thinking and of creating, reformulating, and theorizing about knowledge via traditional discourses”

**Based on different values = different conclusions**

- **indigenous critical praxis**

“ refers to people's own critical reflection ... and then their taking the next step to act on these critical reflections” (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001)

- **The fact people don't adopt one knowledge over another simply because of its origin.**

“farmers see development as progress not only in the adoption of Western farming techniques but also in their utilisation of indigenous knowledge” (Moyo 2009)

“The right to know” (Willinsky 1998)

# What might transformative education on Mangaia look like?

Currently developing critical pedagogical learning frameworks in partnership with teachers

*Kimi ravenga I te titau akatamanako* and critical thinking



- NZQA standards can be tailored:
- Education for sustainability (Efs)
  - Pacific indigenous knowledge

**New standards**

# Education **about (for)** sustainable development



## Education **as** sustainable development

**Mangaian knowledge** and **epistemology** and **relevant western knowledge** used to develop real solutions to SD in a local context.



**Multiple  
livelihoods**



**Resilience**



**discuss and contest positions on SD continuum** (Jickling 2004)

- Ecocentric versus technocentric
- Ecosystem versus biosphere people

**reject “technological determinism”** (Hodson 2003) and the  
**“myths of modernity”** (Bowers 2008)

**go beyond romanticizing culture for political reasons** (Sveiby 2009)

**Rethinking curriculum and pedagogy makes educational sense**

- Making connections to students lives
- Aligning experiences to important outcomes
- Designing experiences that interest students (Aitken and Sinnema 2006)

## Teaero (1999) identified barriers to indigenous education

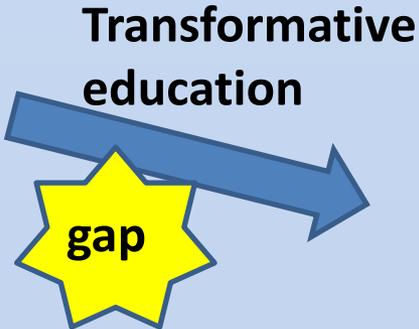
- The foreign nature of formal education.
- Local teachers indoctrinated with western ideas
- Lack of relevant literature on indigenous education
- Aid-driven nature of educational innovation and reform
- Inferiority perception of anything local
- Politicisation of education
- Costs.



Ministry interested in the identification of **barriers** and potential **solutions**



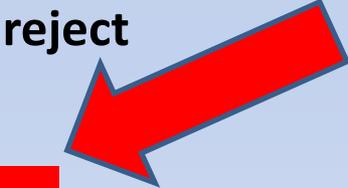
ESD  
UNESCO



Students ...



Myths of modernity  
Technological determinism  
Globalisation?



Empowered  
to lead own  
development



Mangaian endogenous  
sustainable development

**“people cannot be developed, they can only develop themselves”**

**(Julius Nyerere,  
former first  
President of  
Tanzania )**

**“if the people are the principal actors, the relevant reality must be people’s own, constructed by them only”**

**(Rahman, 1993)**

**Taka'i koe ki te papa 'enua,  
'Akamou i te pito 'enua.  
A'u i to'ou rangi.**

**You step on to solid land,  
Affix the umbilical chord  
And carve out your world**



**We envisage that by 2020, the development of the Cook Islands will be led by Cook Islanders. NSDP**