



TVET Journalism Initiative

Pacific Media Assistance Scheme
IMPACT ASSESSMENT BRIEFING

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PACMAS
Pacific Media Assistance Scheme



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ACRONYMS

FNU	Fiji National University
MEP	Media Educators Pacific
NUS	National University of Samoa
PACMAS	Pacific Media Assistance Scheme
PDD	Program Design Document
PMCF	Pacific Media Communications Facility
SINU	Solomon Islands National University (Formerly SICHE)
TIHE	Tonga Institute of Higher Education
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VIT	Vanuatu Institute of Technology



TVET Journalism Initiative

BACKGROUND

The TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) Journalism Initiative focuses on engaging and working closely with the TVET journalism courses offered in five Pacific countries. It identifies the need to strengthen the professionalism of journalism and the provision of high quality entry-level journalism training.

The five TVETs involved in the activity are Fiji National University (FNU and formerly called the Fiji Institute of Technology), National University of Samoa (NUS), Solomon Islands National University (SINU and formerly called Solomon Islands College of Higher Education), Tonga Institute of Higher Education (TIHE) and Vanuatu Institute of Technology (VIT).

This PACMAS activity continues and builds on past program activities with the TVETs in the Pacific. Australian Aid's previous program of assistance, the Pacific Media Communications Facility (PMCF) implemented a program to support entry level media and journalism training from 2004–2007. This was followed by TVET activity implemented as part of PACMAS Phase 1 (2008–2010) as part of the journalism training component.

The Journalism Training Study (Skuse 2011) recommended key activity and support areas to continue TVET support. This was followed by the TVET Strategic Engagement Design (December 2012) commissioned by PACMAS and delivered by the Applied Communication Collaborative Unit at the University of Adelaide. This engagement design informed the overall design of the current TVET Journalism Initiative. The initiative is one of the PACMAS strategic activities and was implemented by Telinga Media Pty Ltd.

For further details, please refer to Journalism Training Study (2011) by Andrew Skuse (Australian Aid Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) AidWorks Initiative No: INJ270) and TVET Strategic Engagement Design, December 2012.

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ACTIVITY DESIGN

The objective of the TVETs Journalism Initiative is to ensure 'sustainable, accredited and accessible industry-oriented tertiary-level training is available for new entrants to the media industry' (PACMAS program design 2011).

The long-term outcome is higher quality and more relevant TVET journalism qualifications, leading to better educated journalists. Three activities were delivered as part of the current phase:

- 1 Develop new curriculum as part of the TVET certificate and diploma media and journalism courses
- 2 Build capacity in innovative approaches to teaching journalism
- 3 Broaden access to journalism/communication for development (C4D) training resources and thematic material

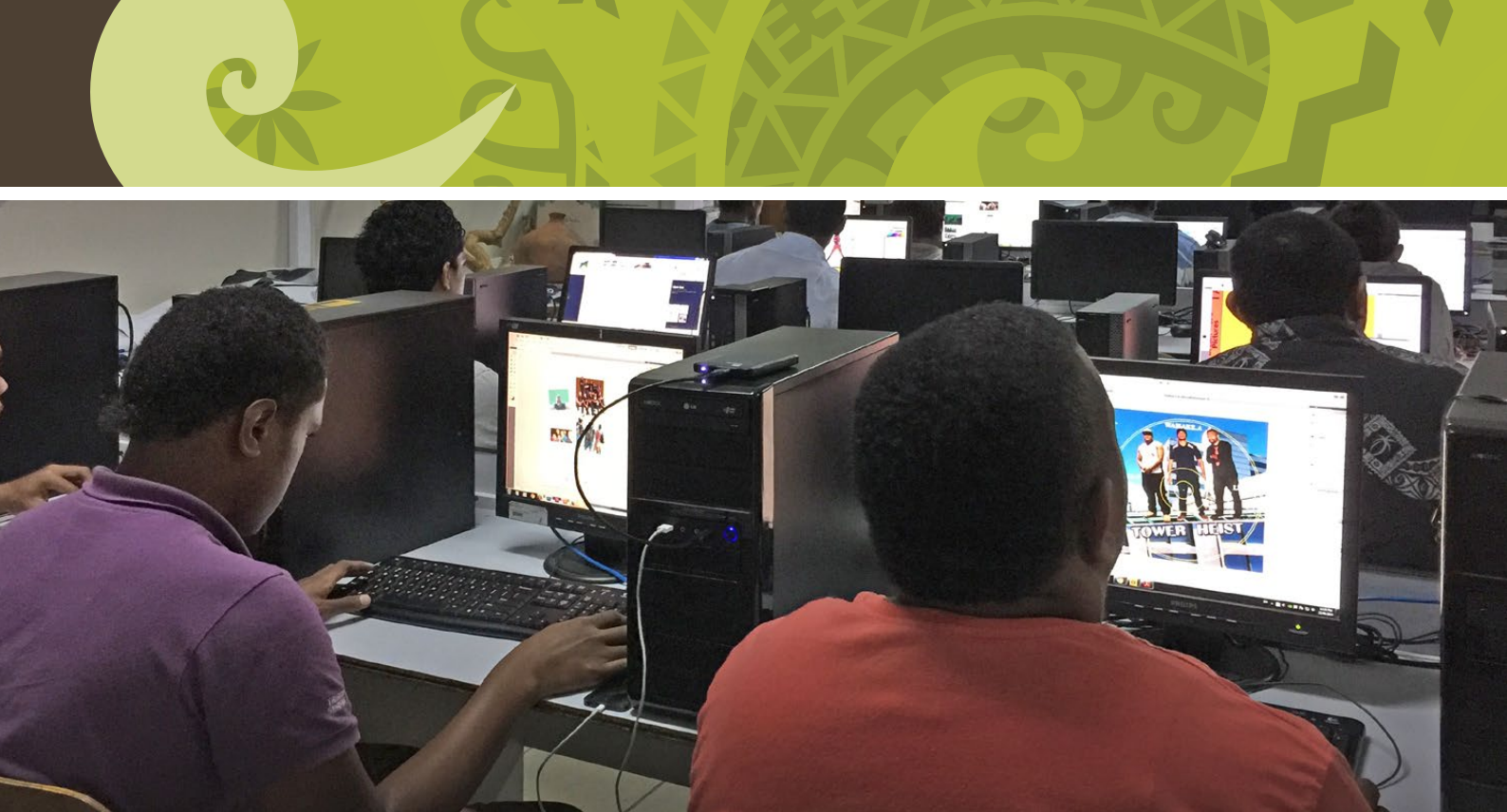
Outcomes of activities under this initiative as defined at its launch include:

- *A package of easily accessible training and audio-visual resources promoting innovation (including collating existing ones), for use by TVET staff, students, existing media and journalism sectors, as well as by a wide range of government, non-government and civil society actors and organisations;*
- *Updated existing curriculum for the TVET Certificate in Media and Journalism and the Diploma in Media and Journalism;*
- *New and contemporary journalism curriculum modules to accompany existing course offerings;*
- *Innovative delivery of the TVET journalism courses through a focus on small-group teaching, developing low-technology/resource media production and internships;*
- *Better skilled Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) journalism staff through short course training;*
- *Increased ability of TVET staff to network and share ideas, experience and mentor each other.*

The outputs produced to achieve these outcomes include: five course modules with thirty six original pieces of content included as part of modules and an innovative teaching guide for the trainers. Each of the five modules has twenty-eight session plans.

Two workshops were organised in Suva, Fiji with participation from at least four of the five TVETs represented at each of the workshops (January 2015 and June 2015). These workshops focused on innovative teaching methodology and familiarising the TVET representatives with the new modules.

The outcomes are discussed in each of the relevant impact areas.



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METHODOLOGY

The evaluation involved an analysis of all data and reports submitted by implementing partners, interviews with representatives of four out of five TVETs and a follow-up discussion with six representatives across the four TVETs. The interviews and discussion were administered in Suva, Fiji as part of the second workshop for the TVET Journalism Initiative (22–26 June, 2015). The workshop involved TVET participation from Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. There was no representation from SINU due to staff turnover issues.

The qualitative data from the interview and discussion has been combined and thematically analysed to understand the impact of the TVET Journalism Initiative. The initiative was implemented from March 2014 to July 2015 and this impact assessment focusses on the specific activities implemented and outcomes achieved during this period.

Please note that the evaluation was conducted in June–July 2015 with the delivery of final modules and gender audit due on 31 July, 2015 and a follow-up quality assessment of modules due in August–September 2015. The quality assessment of modules and outcomes of the gender audit are excluded from this analysis (due for completion at the time of writing this report).

TVET Journalism Initiative

KEY AREAS OF IMPACT

There are four key areas of impact of the TVET journalism initiative that were highlighted by the participants. These areas of impact also relate to the outcomes as identified in the design of the initiative and the relevant outcomes are included under specific areas of impact.

Project based learning for future ready students

Key proposed outcomes for project based learning as part of the activity design:

- *Innovative delivery of the TVET journalism courses through a focus on small-group teaching, developing low-technology/resource media production and internships;*
- *Better skilled Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) journalism staff through short-course training.*

The Innovative Teaching Guide delivered as part of the initiative provides “strategies for TVET teachers of journalism in the South Pacific to develop teaching capabilities which facilitate the professionalisation of journalism practice and builds on higher order thinking skills: critical and creative thinking, problem solving, analysis and interpretation.” The focus of the guide is on adapting a project based learning approach, which takes a student-centered learning approach involving peer engagement and cooperative learning. The guide is a comprehensive blueprint for project based learning and teaching customised to the Pacific regional TVETs media and journalism programs.

These approaches were discussed with the participants and have been well received by TVET representatives with positive feedback on the relevance and utility of such an approach in the region. The participants found the workshop useful and practical with the possibility of applying their learning directly in the classroom environment.



“I’ve seen the value of it (the workshop) it’s not just another workshop that you sit in and think “I know this stuff, why am I doing this?” You sit here (in workshop) and you feel equipped, it’s current, it’s stuff you can take TIHE forward with.”

SIOSIFA PAMONA, TIHE

The participants identified multiple benefits of such an approach for teachers, students and the media sector as a whole.

Project based learning was identified as a catalyst for creative thinking and independent learning, and provides practical hands-on experience to students. As the penetration of digital technologies grows in the Pacific, the participants identified that there was an increase in student capacity to use digital tools like mobile phones and advance their learning online. Students are also responsive and engage with new technologies with ease.



"It's all about being innovative and creative and that's exactly what you need to bring out of the students' minds."

MISA VICKY LEPOU, NUS

The main benefit of the modules for teachers was that using such an approach can help teachers develop clear and well defined class and course plans with identifiable outputs at the end of the module. It was also considered suitable for teachers in the Pacific context who have been creative and resourceful and can utilise new technologies to support teaching particularly in countries like Tonga with high speed internet.



"Project based learning is one of the best solutions for delivering a program like this for a TVET like TIHE."

SIOSIFA PAMONA, TIHE



"We need to acknowledge that TVET teachers are very resourceful in terms of knowledge and the experiences we've had, so we have that common thing together."

ESLYN KALTONGGA, VIT

The approach was also considered in line with the changes and trends in the media industry. It was acknowledged that such an approach can better prepare students to meet the industry needs and ensure that they can meet the industry expectations in future.



"90% of what we should give these students is hands-on, practical work not just theory. Project based learning is relevant and valuable. It's the future, the way things are going"

SIOSIFA PAMONA, TIHE

It was also recognised that the challenge and onus of implementation of such an approach rests with the teachers. Concerns were expressed about the ability and capacity of teachers to provide ongoing support and intensive oversight to students on the delivery of their projects. However, some of the participants stated that they were already using such approaches and have found them useful in their course delivery. The real benefits and challenges of project based learning approaches will only be realised when the modules are implemented by the TVETs and it is noted that the experiences may vary significantly depending on the TVET capacity and availability of staff and resources to administer project based learning approach.



Pacific Storytelling using local content

Key proposed outcomes for embedding local content as part of the new modules are:

- *Updated existing curriculum for the TVET Certificate in Media and Journalism and the Diploma in Media and Journalism;*
- *A package of easily accessible training and audio-visual resources promoting innovation (including collating existing ones), for use by TVET staff, students, existing media and journalism sectors, as well as by a wide range of government, non-government and civil society actors and organisations.*

The innovation in use of local content as part of the courses works on three levels; firstly, the project systematically invested in the creation (original) and sourcing (non-original) of Pacific content; secondly, this investment target multimedia material; and thirdly, considerable resources have been invested to make as much of this multimedia teaching material available in language. While the project is not the first to introduce use of media content in Pacific journalism courses, the comprehensive approach towards content planning for the course modules is a first for the regional TVETs media and journalism programs. The participants also acknowledged the benefits of such an approach in their reflections on the use of local content for Pacific storytelling.

Participants emphasized the need for adapting the teaching methodology to meet the needs of the Pacific context. It was also acknowledged that the lack of local content examples has often been a gap; the examples shared by the teachers may not be directly applicable in the country/Pacific context. Local content as part of the course modules provides an opportunity for both teachers and students to engage with familiar, relevant and useful materials that speak directly to their country and regional context.



"... Use the local examples of what climate change is. What does it mean for Samoa, for the community? From where they come from they have seen it, but they just can't say it... and bring in that Pacific knowledge of storytelling, within our culture to convey that message."

MISA VICKY LEPOU, NUS



"It is localised, it's with the people, it is in an environment that they are familiar with... it is more relevant for them. They can relate to it."

ESLYN KALTONGGA, VIT

The participants acknowledged that the modules were well structured and provided a clear plan of action in delivery of courses. The content included as part of the modules also provides examples and illustrations for students to produce better quality content. Some of the participants also attributed the use of content in teaching as a new innovative approach to delivery of the courses at the TVETs and highly relevant, particularly in the field of media and journalism.



"It is also well structured, the new modules... It does not mean that the current modules are not well structured but this one, the layout is clearer."

DAVE MANDAVAH, VIT

Customising new modules and session plans in existing courses

- *New and contemporary journalism curriculum modules to accompany existing course offerings.*

TVET teachers can customise the modules and session plans in two ways - firstly, to present self-contained, semester-long units in the five module areas or integrate content into existing units; and secondly, the materials and associated training allow TVET teachers to offer units at different qualification levels (certificate and diploma).

Participants agreed that the new session plans can be easily customised into the existing modules and courses. Some of the participants also highlighted that they have already started applying project based learning approaches in delivery of their courses adapting existing materials. This has helped them to get a realistic sense of both the benefits and challenges of using such an approach at their respective TVETs.

TVETs undertake regular review of their courses, after 3 to 5 years in most cases. The course and curriculum is updated based on such reviews. It was mentioned that NUS has already undertaken such a review while VIT and TIHE were soon to undertake the review of their curriculum. The adoption of complete modules will need to be a part of such a review. There are still opportunities to include some of the session plans to pilot and trial the outcomes to be delivered by customising the resources being delivered as part of the TVET journalism initiative.



"We are trying to shift paradigms and it is already happening...The resources in the module are there, the package is readily available for us to use...students are more responsive to innovative and creative approaches."

MISA VICKY LEPOU, NUS

While the course modules can be easily customised, there are challenges as to whether these modules will be adopted by the TVETs. There were two potential barriers that were recognised by the workshop participants. Firstly, it will be difficult for the TVET trainers and teachers to adapt their practice to new teaching methods. There is likely to be institutional resistance to any drastic changes to the prevalent teaching methodology. The onus of creating institutional buy-in within TVETs (across all levels including senior management) rests with the TVET trainers. Secondly, it will be challenging to implement the new modules with existing resources. It may also be difficult in some cases to identify and engage with relevant resource people or people with expertise in a particular subject area to deliver the modules.



"We don't have enough resources to facilitate all these modules. And with the new ones you need the resources; because the resources give the results."

DAVE MANDAVAH, VIT



The use of new modules and session plans requires a shift for both teachers and students in their approach to teaching and learning. It also may need additional support and resources depending on the existing level of resourcing for the TVET. However, as one of the participants at the workshop stated:



“The Pacific has never been in a better time to deliver content on any platform educationally because we are all connected...this raises the hope that things can change and potentially go forward in a positive direction... and what PACMAS is doing with these workshops is great.”

SIOSIFA PAMONA, TIHE

Media Educators Pacific – Regional initiative

- Increased ability of TVET staff to network and share ideas, experience and mentor each other.

Regional networking was one of the key focus areas for the initiative specifically with a focus on sustainability and to ensure that the media educators/trainers can take ownership of the modules and future support is needs based and better coordinated. Regional cooperation and networking was emphasized at both the TVET workshops (in January and June 2015). The first workshop (January 2015) discussed the potential of regional cooperation and networking tools available. This included an analysis of the purpose, availability and feasibility of the existing networking platforms that are available within the region. This was followed up with the “Regional Networking Tool” report delivered in April 2015 and shared with all participants and discussed through an online forum. The second workshop in June helped the participants to respond to the proposed tools and potential areas of collaboration for regional networking.

The need for a regional network was emphasised by all participants repeatedly with a positive momentum to work together, learn and cooperate with TVETs and educational institutions across the region. The participants recognised that they operated in a similar context facing similar challenges and would immensely benefit by sharing their experiences with each other.



“Now when I go back I can email my colleague in Tonga or in Samoa and ask them for assistance, how do you teach this in your TVET? I can learn from regional colleagues”

ESLYN KALTONGGA, VIT

The TVET representatives were driven and motivated to start a network where they could share ideas and experience, develop curricula and mentor each other. It was also stated that while these ideas have been discussed in the past, there has been limited follow-up and activity to promote these initiatives. Also, emerging technologies can be an enabler and help the TVET trainers to collaborate on an ongoing basis. The participants agreed to utilise “Google Plus and Hangouts” as their preferred platform for establishing a regional network based on the workshop discussions and practical hands-on experience of the platforms.



“Regional cooperation has to happen now... there are many ways educators can help each other... there’s so many doors and opportunities available”

MISA VICKY LEPOU, NUS

The trainers have initiated Media Educators Pacific as a regional network and launched it at the end of the second TVET journalism initiative workshop on 26th June, 2015 in Fiji Suva. The group plans to use online platforms (Google Plus and Hangouts) as a way of keeping in contact, share staff and student resources, create open chat forums, showcase and publish staff and students’ work and research and assist each other with content exchange¹. The group includes the TVETs from Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga and USP in Fiji. The core strength of the group lies in its Pacific ownership by the TVET representatives who are aware and understand the context and limitations they operate in and can devise solutions to meet their needs at a local/regional level.

The TVET Journalism Initiative has introduced and consolidated the use of project based learning approaches to journalism sector in the Pacific. It has designed and drafted five new course modules featuring local content from across five Pacific countries to respond to the needs of the region and ensure that the journalism training evolves with the changing media landscape. The launch of the Media Educators Pacific (MEP) group may result in a sustainable ownership of the modules and also regional cooperation in the Pacific TVET sector.

1 National University of Samoa Website: Media Educators Pacific join forces (1 July 2015)
<http://www.nus.edu.ws/s/index.php/87-nus/news-events/297-media-educators-pacific-mep-join-forces>



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Further information:

<http://www.pacmas.org/>

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