



COPE Secretary General Mr. Govind Singh

MESSAGE FROM COPE SECRETARY GENERAL

It gives me profound pleasure to pen an editorial for the Journal of Pacific Teacher Unions.

The annual publication is inclusive of reports, activities and issues from 17 affiliates in 11 countries. It is a forum which gives space to affiliates to share amongst Pacific Teacher Unions success stories. It exposes opportunities for identifying issues. It creates understanding for networking and mobilising views and opinions on matters of national and regional interests.

This issue is special in that it coincides with the youth delegate conference. The youth conference included training programmes on leadership, organising and campaigns. The conference is becoming increasingly popular and was centred on the theme “Trade Union Training on Creating Strong, Democratic and Independent Unions.”
Council of Pacific Education

conference paid particular emphasis on COPE Women's Network, reviewing the focus, direction and strategy for the women teacher union networkers. The theme for the women conference “Campaigning Together for Change and Justice” attracted a series of high powered speakers.

The COPE Triennial Conference in all was a five day comprehensive programme designed to build knowledge and skills necessary for trade union work. It also provided an opportunity to understand the socio political, distinct cultural, slow economic growth and typical Pacific geographical challenges that Pacific communities live in.

The theme for the 2016 COPE Triennial Conference was “The Role of Pacific Teacher Organisations towards 2030 Education Agenda and Framework: A New Vision for Education.”



COPE President Ms. Tili Afamasaga

EI President Ms. Susan Hopgood who hails from the Pacific delivered a motivating keynote address to the rep-

resentatives from 17 affiliates in 11 countries.

I hope the delegates will find Pacific Teacher useful and informative. Affiliates are also invited to make suggestions to improve the next publication. I thank the General Secretary of Education International Fred Van Leeuwen for never giving up the fight to achieve EI goals and for being an inspiring global leader. I thank



Mr. Sasaki Officer In Charge ILO Office Suva & Ms. Hopgood EI President

Ms Susan Hopgood for her outstanding global outreach and keeping the EI family focussed. I thank DC Partners for financial support to the Pacific affiliates. I also thank the UN organisations in the Pacific particularly, ILO, UNESCO and UNICEF for assistance in progressing the difficult focus areas that are critical for delivery of quality education in the Pacific.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (PNGTA)

Papua New Guinea is a country of diverse cultures and traditions. With more than 800 languages, 600 islands contrasted by dense forests and rugged terrain, more than 7 million people inhabit this vast land.

Such diversity has often made

social services such as education.

Schools in urban centres now face the realities of over crowding due to the influx of the urban drift. Enrolment figures have increased dramatically and in turn teachers have to deal with high student/teacher ratio as well as availability of classrooms to cater for additional students.



Mr. Mowana General Secretary PNGTA (Right)

decision making a challenge for people's desire for equal distribution of economic opportunities and infrastructure development. Papua New Guinea has had its fair share of economic development in recent times and as it moves beyond its forty-five years of independence, there are more pressing needs to address in terms of driving service delivery efforts towards the rural areas of the country. Port Moresby as the capital city of Papua New Guinea has undergone major infrastructure developments over the past five years. This in many respects has deprived much needed social and economic development requirements in rural areas, thus, the challenges of urban migration poses a real strain to

As the country heads towards its general elections in 2017, major government policies such as Tuition Fee Free Education will be monitored closely to ensure that these are effectively implemented.

PNG Political Brief

The People's National Congress led by Prime Minister Peter O'Neill has been in government since 2011. Despite the university student protests and a vote of no confidence in mid-2016, the government continues to implement key policies in Education, Health, Economic and Infrastructure Development. Currently, the country is moving with the very strong political will to bring about tangible developments to the 89 districts of the country.

The country will hold its general elections in 2017 and the government is adamant that its key development policies are effectively delivered as it

enjoys a full term of parliament.

Economic Challenges

Papua New Guinea experienced unprecedented economic progress over the past five years as a result of the PNGLNG Project as well as rapid infrastructure developments particularly in Port Moresby to host the Pacific Games in 2015. The planned APEC Meeting in 2018 as well as other major international sporting events to be staged in Port Moresby over the coming months have driven economic progress.

Despite this, global downturn in commodity export prices has affected further economic growth. The governments Tuition Fee Free Education Policy has been greatly affected with some schools having to operate on meagre budgets as funding cuts to key priority areas in Education and Health have been affected.

This situation is further worsened by the decreasing value of the Kina over recent years.

Social Dislocation

Urban drift and growing unemployment figures in urban towns and cities are of great concern for Papua New Guinea's law and order problems. With the scaling down of major infrastructure developments and construction projects as a result of global economic challenges, the government has set its focus on increasing manpower needs of

police and other disciplinary institutions to maintain law and order amongst a rapidly growing population.

ed by the Minister for Education. This initiative should at least alleviate the growing need for teachers houses experienced in many

serve its members remain.

At the time of writing this report, PNGTA has resumed discussions with the Teaching Service Commission to negotiate progressive increases for its members for the 2017 to 2019 Wage Fixation Agreement. The current Agreement (2014 – 2016) which has seen significant increases in teacher salaries and entitlements will lapse on 31 December 2016.



PNGTA National Executives

Tuition Fee Free Education Challenges

The current government continues the Tuition Fee Free Education Policy as its development priority goal in PNG. Issues of disbursement of funds as well as the distribution of teaching and learning materials have been a major challenge in the implementation of this policy.

Enrolment figures in urban schools have increased quite dramatically causing real strain on teacher/student ratio as well as on existing school infrastructure. In contrast, rural schools have continued to operate as normal despite more focus being placed on urban schools. Teacher deployment in rural areas continues to pose real challenges and serious considerations to provide incentives to attract teachers for rural settings.

Furthermore, the government has increased parliamentarians Provincial and Districts (DSIP&PSIP) funds to implement the one double classroom and two teacher houses initiat-

schools throughout the country.

The Papua New Guinea Teachers' Association and Challenges in Organising

The Papua New Guinea Teachers' Association (PNGTA) was registered as an Industrial Organisation under the Industrial Organisation Act of Papua New Guinea on 1st of April, 1971. Currently, the Association has a total of 19,582 members and this number fluctuates between 18,000 and 23,000 annually. The PNGTA has a potential growth of membership yet to be realised as the country's total teacher population is almost 58, 0000.

Issues and Development

Despite the challenges faced over the past few months, PNGTA has endeavoured to ensure its key functions and obligations to

The Association has supported the government's policy for Universal Basic Education, Tuition Fee Free Education, Standards Based Curriculum as well Infrastructure Development in schools.

PNGTA has supported the national government's Teacher Biometric Project for monitoring teacher attendance in schools.

PNGTA actively participates as a member of the Parliamentary Review Committee tasked to review teacher salaries and entitlements. This committee has travelled throughout the country to gauge views of teachers in the wider spectre. These meetings have proven to benefit the Committee to align relevant submissions to parliament for possible legislative approvals to improve teacher conditions.

Excellence Award for Teachers

The Association has acknowledged the Prime Minister's initiative to recognise teachers in the country through the PNG Teacher Excellence Awards. Teachers will now be recognised for outstanding services through

this national award system.

PNGTA believes that the government needs to develop a comprehensive human resource development policy for the country and in the teaching service the government must attract and train more teachers and make rural environment more conducive for teacher deployment. Despite the challenges faced over the past few months, PNGTA has endeavoured to ensure its key functions and obligations to serve its members remain.

New Challenges for Union Leaders

The events experienced by the Papua New Guinea Teachers' Association (PNGTA) in May 2016 should never be experienced by any trade union organisation in the Pacific.

With well over 20,000 members, PNGTA is by far the largest public sector workers union in Papua New Guinea and plays a vital role in advocating principals of democracy and actively contributes its views and opinions in public forums and news media on national issues.

As such, PNGTA has been at the forefront since 2015 of revitalising a dormant PNG Trade Union Congress in collaboration with majority of the public and private sector workers unions in the country.

These efforts as well as the need for active leadership resulted in the election of the National General Secretary of PNGTA as President of the



PNGTA Women Network Committee with COPE Secretary General

Trade Union Congress in April 2016.

Whilst the workers unions welcomed the election of the new President of PNGTUC, key government officials viewed this as a calculated move by workers to exert more pressure on the Prime Minister who was called upon to resign by protesting university students and non-government organisations (NGOs) for his refusal to be interviewed by police over allegations of corruption and mismanagement of the national economy.

The national government moved swiftly to counter the rising support and growing strength of workers by ensuring that PNGTA had to be brought under control.

Arrest and Detention of Union Leaders

On the evening of Tuesday 4th May 2016, the National General Secretary of PNGTA was arrested and detained by Police.

The Industrial Registrar of the Department of Labour and Industrial Relations then moved in to suspend the National General Secre-

tary and appointed a Caretaker Administrator to manage the affairs of PNGTA. The actions of the Industrial Registrar is deemed to have been illegal by the Courts reinstatement of the National General Secretary on 20th August 2016.

The actual suppression and indignation that the officers and executives of PNGTA experienced when the PNG government used its institutions to take over the management of PNGTA is a cause for concern for trade union movement in PNG and the Pacific.

Making Teaching Profession Attractive



Mr. Raymond Ray Ms. Annette Appa & of PNGTA (From Left)

PNGTA remains steadfast to uphold the principles of democracy and fairness. The recent events have strengthened the resolve of its Executives to continue to lead PNGTA to remain focussed in working towards achieving its objectives.

As PNGTA continues its negotiations with the government through the Teaching Service Commission for its new Wage Fixation Agreement (2017 – 2019), the teaching profession looks more attractive than ever before.

FIJI TEACHERS UNION (FTU)

2015-2016 has been another challenging year for the Teacher Unions in Fiji. As I had reported at the World Congress in Montreal, the Ministry of Education has continued to initiate reforms without any consultation with the Unions. Numerous letters written have not been responded to and despite this the Union has continued to make submissions on Terms & Conditions of work as well as policy matters.

The Union wrote to the Minister for Public Service, drawing his attention to the concerns regarding lack of consultations.

The Union has also written to the Attorney General asking him to expedite the setting up of the Arbitration Court and the Public Service Disciplinary Tribunal. The Union has no avenue in terms of redress at the moment on collective disputes. Individual grievances are now being pursued through the Employment Relations Tribunal.

Amendments to the Employment Relations Promulgation

The ERP, which is the national labor law, was amended by Decree in 2010. The amendment effectively eliminated the Public Sector Unions from the ERP. The right to seek redress and the right to collective bargaining were taken away. After 6 years of struggle spearheaded by FTUC, ITUC and EI, the ILO intervened and facilitated an agreement of the social partners that the amendments be repealed to comply with Conventions 87 and 98. This law became effective on 17th February 2016. Indeed a milestone achievement for the Trade Union Movement and the workers of Fiji.

There are pending issues like the list of essential services which will be addressed through technical assistance to be provided by ILO.

Separate Tribunal Established

Under the amended ERP, a separate Labor Tribunal has been established to deal with all collective disputes of Public Sector Unions expeditiously. It is hoped that this institution will be functional in the near future. We have already filed 3 cases.

Due Process Not Followed

The 2013 Constitution pro-

vides Permanent Secretaries powers to deal with all employment matters including disciplinary cases. The Ministry of Education had terminated several teachers without following the due processes. The Union had to pursue the matter through a Judicial Review. The Court reinstated the members with full pay and directed the Ministry to follow the due processes.



FTU General Secretary Mr. Agni Deo Singh during COPE Conference

Lack of Transparency in Ap- pointment / Promotions

“Since 2014, numerous hand-picked persons have been appointed to senior positions in the Ministry.

Promotions have also been questioned by Union members who deem they were better qualified than the promotees. The members, with the assistance of the Union, have submitted several cases with the Employment Relations Tribunal.”

Entry Point Salary Cut Inhumane



L-R: Danial Urai(FTUC), Agni Singh(FTU General Secretary), Govind Singh (COPE SG), Minister for Labour (Fiji), Felix Anthony (FTUC)

“In 2015, the entry point salary of teachers was reduced by almost 50%. The main purpose was to recruit twice the number allocated in the Budget to address teacher shortage. The Union objected consistently and vehemently, as this was exploitation at its worst. These officers were finally put on the correct scale at the beginning of 2016. The Union has filed a case for payment of full salary for 2015.”

Tackling Child Labor a Challenge

“FTU as an affiliate of FTUC has been involved in the “Tackle Project” since 2008. Coordinated by ILO, the Program includes the social partners as well as NGOs. The objective is to keep children out of child labor through education. The project is funded by EU.

FTU has identified through its network and assisted more than 2000 children at risk of dropping out. At the time of this reporting 50 more primary school children in the informal settlement were being assisted.”

Cyclone Winston: The Father of All Cyclones in Fiji

TC Winston had an unprecedented devastating effect on around 50% of the total population. Some 260 schools were almost completely destroyed. Hundreds of thousands became homeless within hours. International support was overwhelming. Rebuilding will take a long time. Like most organizations FTU immediately launched an appeal with a seed fund of \$20 000 from its coffers. COPE through its affiliates contributed a handsome \$44,000. We have been able to assist the affected schools with stationery and other needs. We wish to record our appreciation to all those who contributed.

Education Budget is Promising but

The 2016 Budget allocated the largest chunk to Education. However, a substantial portion is for rebuilding the schools. There is no salary increase except for early childhood teachers. The last salary increase was in 2013 before the National Elections.

The Union’s LOG of Claims is being pursued through the Industrial Machinery.

Capacity Building & Organizing and On Going Activity for FTU

In December 2015, a 3 day workshop was organized for the leaders of FTU and FTA. The funding was provided by EI. In April 2016, another 3 day workshop was organized for both the Unions basically to familiarize the leaders with the amended labor laws and how they could seek redress through the dispute mechanism. EI and COPE are heartily thanked for the kind assistance.

Fifty percent of the partici-



FTU and ILO during World Day Against Child Labour

pants were women leaders.

Development Cooperation

FTU has begun to assist COPE in union development in the Pacific Islands. The FTU General Secretary conducted sessions on how to establish credit unions for the KUT and SNTA. We will continue with the program as and when required.

Mr. Singh Concludes.....

“While the challenges are numerous, the Union movement as usual must continue to per-

government which lacked democratic principles, processes and wide consultations.

The ILO Joint Implementation agreement between Workers Representatives which included FTUC & FICTU met with Employers and Government Representatives to discuss strategies needed for a complete return to democracy especially the review of the decrees that were made prior to elections in 2014.

put in place without the usual consultation with the stakeholders.

The unprecedented rate of circulars, directives, policies and reforms emanating from the Ministry of Education has added to the chaos that is evident in the administration and the teaching learning programs in schools.

Despite the current tense political climate, the decisions made without proper consultation with stakeholders and the decrees which are aimed at silencing the voice of democracy in Fiji, FTA has maintained its stand through the principles of democracy and the rule of law. Needless to say, FTA continues to seek guidance and intervention to sort things out in these trying times to steer us into a future which will bring true democracy with union rights truly accepted through the country's laws.

Economic Policies

The Bainimarama Government has tried to develop policies to assist its economic status which are aimed at having flow on effect on the government, industries, the Trade Union Movement and the ordinary people.

The Fiji National Provident Fund is now totally run by the government without any employee representatives. A number of policies had been changed recently which had some adverse effects on the members. There have been words of caution relayed by the Reserve Bank of Fiji on the economic situation in Fiji highlighting unemployment figures and current debt servicing by



severe. We are inspired by achievements and are confident of overcoming the hurdles ahead.”

FIJIAN TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (FTA)

The Country and the Union

Fiji after the elections in 2014 continues under the leadership of Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama. However, the decrees made between 2006 and 2014 need to change as they were made through a military

Many issues including the continuing appointment of military officers in government often deprives career civil servants of opportunities, the case of keeping the retirement age at 60 which FTA had won in a high court decision and overruled by decrees, the termination and suspension of civil servants without due processes continue to portray characteristics of a military government.

The recent open merit system introduced by the current government has been

the government. Some signs of economic growth have been witnessed in various sectors like building, manufacturing, garment and tourism.

Union History and Activities

The history of the Fijian Teachers Association is well documented and known to our sister organizations in the Pacific. Its current membership was badly reduced to less than one thousand after the implementation of the new compulsory retirement age for civil servants to fifty five (55), where more than nine hundred teachers retired on 30/04/09. It was further reduced to less than 200 members after **checkoff** [automatic union subscriptions deductions] was phased out by the military regime in August of 2011, aiming to cripple unions and against the spirit of ILO 87 and 98. Now, membership has again risen to more than three thousand and it is envisaged that more will be joining through our membership drives.

Challenges

One of the challenges faced by FTA is the increasing number of suspensions and terminations of our members for inflicting corporal punishment and the seven day absence decree. The Ministry has been very harsh on the teachers and is hardly lenient to the extent of hearing both sides of the issues and often terminating teachers' pays before a proper investigation is conducted. FTA has been voicing its concern to the Ministry of Educa-



FTA and FTU delegates to COPE Triennial

tion and government that properly instituted procedures must be followed. The Association is yet to file its disputes with the Ministry of Labour now that it has been allowed after the timely intervention by ILO.

The Association felt a great relief after ILO's intervention which resulted in the resumption of the Checkoff system two years ago whereby members subs are deducted at source, the formation of the Employment Relations Advisory Board where Union reps are represented, the resumption of civil servant cases to be heard through the normal labour machinery and so forth. The Association is therefore sincerely thankful to ILO, EI and COPE in supporting it during these trying times and we all look forward to the government's positive action towards ILO's recommendation.

Another challenge at FTA is in trying to maintain its membership and also in convincing new graduates to join the Union. Membership drives are ongoing by the Union through the use of its weekly radio programmes, branch and area visits and letters to teachers requesting them to either maintain their membership or become new members.

A new initiative has been the conduct of school visits whereby members and potential members are being informed of



FTA Women Delegates to the COPE/EI ILS Program

services provided and also urged to maintain their support and new ones recruited.

Under the FICTU umbrella, FTA works with the other Public Sector Unions in trying to convince the government to look after the workers of the country and for the maintenance of an amicable working relationship.



At one of the Women's Network Workshops held at FTA Hall.

FTA had also been in partnership with the Fiji Teachers Union under the Fiji Teachers Confederation on common issues such as working conditions of teachers and salary which have been contentious issues, especially after the huge increases in salary for the army where new recruits who train for at least three months start at \$18,000 as compared to teachers who start at \$12,000 - \$14,000 after being trained for two to three years. This is something that FTA is seriously taking up to government and has been mentioned recently in Parliament by FTA's former Principal Admin Officer, Hon. Mikaele Leawere.

The Fiji Teachers Confederation continues to make submissions to government for teachers salary to be increased

in view of the rising cost of living experienced.

It is anticipated that salary increase for teachers will be used as an attraction for elections in 2018.

The Association had also been affected in the sudden change in leadership in early 2014 when the then President, Mrs Mere Moci suddenly resigned due to personal reasons and the Vice President, Mr Gauna Halofaki had to be forced to take the reins. After a few months on, the General Secretary was suspended before being terminated by the Executive Committee. A new General Secretary, Mr Joji Nakaora was appointed and the election of office bearers followed and for the first time in FTA history, it had to be conducted by the National Elections Office as decided by the Electoral Decree. After the elections, Mr Halofaki was elected President with his executives, some of whom are quite new and still have a lot to learn.

During the last three years, FTA along with FTU had been heavily involved in the Unite for Quality Education [UQE]

Campaign and conducted combined meetings in three main centres; Suva, Lautoka and Labasa. The attendance by FTA members had been excellent. FTA also conducted a number of UQE workshops around the country and it was really en-

couraging to witness the support shown by the members, school managements and the public as a whole. The call is for all stakeholders to hold hands and unite to ensure that there is quality education for all irrespective of race, gender, economic status or beliefs. It is only when we stand together that a lot can be achieved in education for the betterment of the children of Fiji.

The Association has also noted the increasing cases of indiscipline amongst the students in schools. It is unfortunate that the law now forbids corporal punishment and right now the MOE and teachers are guided by that law and use positive measures to discipline their students.

Finally, FTA has noted that some of its members have been dying young at ages below 55



In-Solidarity : FTA and FTU delegates to the COPE/EI ILS Program

which is the retirement age for civil servants in Fiji. This has been relayed to our members with the request that they try to develop healthy lifestyles where they control their eating and drinking. As part of our tradition, the Association makes it a point to be repre-

sented at all condolence gatherings and funeral of its members to let their relatives know that we are with them in their mourning. There is also a funeral benefit that FTA Welfare Society gives out to the next of kin to assist them during their period of sorrow.

FTA Achievement

FTA was part of the campaign through employment relation board (ERAB) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) in an effort for government to amend constitution that restricts trade union movement in Fiji.

The ILO in its 105th meeting resolved that Fiji has to sign a Tri Partite Agreement regarding resolving labour management issues in Fiji. This did not happen until 2016 when an ILO delegation came to Fiji. The employment relation promulgation was amended to this effect.

FTA Activities

In summary during the last three years, FTA has been en-

gaged in the following activities:

FTC COPE (ILS) Workshop

FTA /FTU took part in a COPE funded workshop on Labour International Standards (ILS). The 3 day training was to enhance leaders of the teacher unions of the existence of ILO as sources of ILS and how the principles of ILS could help in collective bargaining and resolving disputes.

Unite for Quality Education Campaign: This included combined meetings for FTA and FTU in three main centres and branch workshops. The participants were asked to prepare School Action Plans.

Branch and Area Visits

Visits were made to the rural and urban branches by the Executives.

FTA was able to conduct Women's Network Workshops that we funded as well as those funded by COPE. There were also youth workshops and programs that were organized by our Youth Wing which proved to be very successful as it empowered our women and youths to be knowledgeable on union issues.

FTA conducted its election for executives in October 2016. The election was carried out in compliance with the Fiji Election Decree 11 of 2014. It gives the man-

date to Fiji Election Office to conduct election for trade unions. Critics say that this is a gross violation of worker rights and should not be the case. However FTA constitution was used as the guiding framework for this election.

FTA has managed to carry out its core activities in responding to grievances raised by our members in terms of their salaries, transfers, allowances, unfair decisions against them. Only some decisions were overturned as a result of our meetings and teachers who had been suspended or terminated under the seven-day decree and other offences were given another chance and placed back in schools.



Meeting with the former Acting Permanent Secretary for Education, Mrs Basundra Kumar with FTA Officials

Meeting with the former Acting Permanent Secretary for Education, Mrs Basundra Kumar where some issues/grievances were raised and resolved. The Association was able to conduct its Annual Delegates Conference in 2013 and 2014. The 2015 Conference which in reali-



Mr. Joji Nakaora in Turin, Itali for the ILO Training Program

ty was to be held in 2016 Conference was called off because of the huge devastation caused by Cyclone Winston a Category 5 Cyclone which ravaged through Fiji from February 18 to February 20, 2016.

School in Ba after Cyclone Winston

After Cyclone Winston,



there were visits made to members in their schools and they were assisted through our Natural Disaster benefits under our Welfare Scheme while some were given loans to help them with their rehabilitation. Books and stationery worth more than fifty thousand dollars were donated to affected schools. Some of these schools had to close for quite sometime due to the severe extent of the damages. These schools are still having classes in donated tents and two major schools are still closed and their students sent to attend other schools around the country.

COPE provided a cheque of \$88,000 to the Fiji Teachers Confederation to assist members of the two unions, FTA and FTU in reaching

out to its members who were affected during Cyclone Winston. Secretary General COPE, Mr Govind Singh presented the cheque to the two general secretaries, Mr Agni Deo Singh and Mr Joji Nakaora.

There had been formal and informal meetings with the officials from the Ministry of Education where FTA had raised issues of concern with them.

FTA sent the General Secretary for overseas training at ILO International Training Centre, Turin, Italy. The training on “Promoting Decent Work in Sustainable Supply Chains”

was held from the 20 -24th of June 2016. The training was part of an ongoing capacity building program for FTA workers and executives. The training program focused on the provision of decent workplaces and the role of workers union in the maintenance of supply chain. Supply chain can be used broadly as a concept of maintaining organization running with effective tripatism role. The inclusion of solidarity and networking across region and within local workplaces would help promote working relationship between employers and employees. This will enhance productivity per worker and effectiveness of supply chain.

Plans for the Future

The Fijian Teachers Association continues to embark

on membership drive through the year. The turnover rate reflects different perceptions of how members view the trade union and the role that it plays in the society. Members must be well informed on the evolving roles of trade unions in view of changing national circumstances.

The future direction of the FTA is finding new developments within the Ministry of Education to promote membership drive. The return of Fiji Library Services under MoE and the increase in salary of ECE teachers are available opportunities for this direction. FTA has commercial arms which are engaged in real estate business. With the current net assets standing at \$3m, FTA vision is to continue developing its vacant lot to expand its business value. Union solidarity across other sector workers union is an area which needs to be explored and action taken with urgency.

FTA will join the campaign on raising minimum wage rate. Currently the minimum wage level imposed by law has been sidelined by some ruthless employers. It is sad to note that most of these industries are protected under trade agreements to promote export. FTA together with its public sector counterparts will launch a campaign for a pay rise given the government recent awards for a 85% pay rise for doctors. Public sector workers felt that they deserve the same. FTA forming networking across the region through COPE. It is a way forward for FTA to seek alliance for teacher unions across the region.

Conclusion

The Fijian Teachers Association is satisfied with what



COPE Secretary General presenting the Winston donation to FTA and FTU

trade union movement has achieved for its members. We had struggled for 5 years to sustain our union movement.

The need for quality education continues with a new beginning especially when the recent cyclone destroyed a ma-



FTA Women Coordinator, Mrs. Vuetaki (Right) with Ms. Neselinda of VTU

jority of education infrastructure around Fiji. Affected schools are being rebuilt and teachers and students are having classes in tents and

makeshift sheds. We are hoping that things will begin to normalise once rebuilding of schools are completed.

ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY STAFF OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC (AUSPS)

The Association of University of the South Pacific Staff (AUSPS) represents the Academic, Research and Professional staff of USP.

Currently, the union has a financial membership of just over 200 members. The Association makes regular submissions on terms and conditions of employment, including professional matters directly to USP management or through various committees of USP. The following are the key highlights of AUSPS activities to date.

Fiji Elections Officer, Mereseini Vosa presents the AUSPS election results to the AUSPS executive officers



Registration of Staff Contracts

All fulltime USP staff currently have 3 year contracts and

staff members become eligible for consideration of renewal of their contract after they have served 18 months of their current contract. AUSPS has commenced work on negotiating five year staff contracts for all academic and professional staff. AUSPS will conclude these negotiations by the end of this year so that staff contracts can be rolled over into 5 year terms starting 2017.

Review of Terms and Conditions of the Teaching Assistants

The review of the Terms and Conditions of the Teaching Assistants (TA) has been ongoing since last year. AUSPS has developed its own comparator index based on comparable markets for the salaries of the Teaching Assistants. AUSPS has also proposed a revised salary structure for the TA to the USP management for consideration. We are anticipating to conclude these negotiations hopefully by the end of this year.

Merger of Pacific TAFE and College of Foundation Studies (CFS)

The USP is trying to integrate the above two entities in line with its strategic plan objectives. Both Pacific TAFE and CFS are self-funding learning and teaching sections at the USP. The rational proposed for the merger is that both have clear synergies for a single entity, both administratively and academically.

It is also envisaged that this new entity will provide pathways to higher studies and skills based programmes. However, the integration would

mean a new salary structure for the CFS staff that is de-linked from the current academic structures within faculties and institutes at USP.

Although the merger does not mean any job losses, the new salary structure would mean a reduction in base salaries of the Subject Coordinators. The proposed new salaries of the Subject Coordinators have been benchmarked with Heads of Departments in the secondary schools in Fiji and team leaders from relevant industries.

AUSPS continues to hold several meetings with the Subject Coordinators and USP Management to ensure that the Subject Coordinators are not greatly affected.

De-linking of Professional Staff Salaries

AUSPS has developed a cur-



Mr. Raghuwaiya and Mr. Varunesh of AUSPS during COPE Triennial

rent market based new salary structure for the Professional Staff. The data being used for the new salary structure has been sourced from Price Water House, Coopers and other comparator universities both local and international. AUSPS is now negotiating the

new salary structure with the USP management.

2016 presents an exciting year for AUSPS as we try to resolve many current and outstanding issues.

FRIENDLY ISLANDS TEACHERS UNION (FITU)

FITA to FITU a Transformation

Friendly Island Teachers' Union formerly known as Friendly Islands Teachers Association is a member of COPE and EI since its inception.

FITA members are mostly public schools teachers while those teachers from private and church schools are gradually joining the union.

“Works are in progress for those teachers to become members of FITA although the recruitment of church teachers is not an easy task due to different types of perceptions precipitated by their church doctrines regarding moral obligation and repudiation, however, abandoned of the divine endowment distinguishing man from beast,” says Finau Tutone—President FITU

Partnership

FITA continues consultation with Government Au-

thorities to support its movement to lead and coordinate for a strong democratic and independent professional teacher organization in the Pacific with an understanding that **“NO MAN IS AN ISLAND.”**



Mr. Finau Tutone—FITU President

Leadership

Strengthening of strong and responsible leadership is one of the main focus of FITA.

The organisation has been funded by COPE/EI to improve its leadership and NZEI/AEU/NZPPTA and IEUA recently provided training for Youth Leaders.

Workshops and consultations were conducted with school based members to increase membership and improve the retention of members. All these actions and activities were reported to COPE as providers of funds and technical support.

FITU has exercised prudence in all aspects of administration, management and audit compliance.

Communication Challenges

Efficient communication is very important for a small union like ours. Our members are scattered across many small islands with severe communication challenges.

Radio and TV programs on monthly basis provide effective communications with members as well as the public. World Teachers Day program usually includes a radio program where public are invited to provide comments on how education and teachers performance are to be improved in partnership with parents as natural teachers.

Status of Teachers

“Teaching Profession is upper-

most
part
and
most
valua-
ble
service in
the
whole
world
for
hu-



FITU Delegates performed the Tongan traditional dance— Tau'olunga

man beings,” says Finau. Our teachers are well respected in Tongan culture. Teachers are held in high esteem.

Teaching profession in the past was not socially labelled as high as the other Civil Servants like nurses, police and army because allowances for new recruits was being deemed low. However, after a series of negotiation there is some improvements. This year we celebrate 50th anniversary of UNESCO

Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers.

FITA stands firm with the Rights of Teachers. However, thorough consultation with teachers on the CODE of ETHICS that was introduced, implemented and monitored by COPE 4 years ago is still a favourable agenda for workshops and seminars particularly for the new entrants from Teachers College to the teaching profession . This helps our teachers to realise that the status to some extent is in their hands.

All successes in FITA journey in education rested on the concept of good Gov-

ernance
and
Leadership
of
F I T A
Execu-
tive
Mem-
bers
and
Tongan
Prime
Minister
Akilisi

Pohiva, a member of FITA and one of the pioneers in setting up the organization 20 years ago.

The review of the regulations for Trade Union Act passed by Parliament in 1964 is under process. Once the regulations are passed then FITA will be replaced by FITU. In other words A for Association in FITA is to be replaced by FITU where U stands for

Union. This is a blessing in disguise for FITU members who have struggled for many years for the authority to respect their right to form workers union to bargain with employers for fairness in distribution of wealth between employees and employers.

KIRIBATI UNION OF TEACHERS (KUT)

The Kiribati Union of Teachers, known by the acronym, KUT, has been in operation since the country gained her independence .There is a structure in place since its inception. The highest authority is vested in the AGM, followed by the Executive Council and the Executive Committee. There are also the women’s wing and the youth wing, two additional bodies included in response to the international trend where the inclusion of the women and youth are promoted culminating with the understanding that these two bodies are essential to have a gender balance in the distribution of executive positions.

Membership of KUT

KUT is comprised of teachers who teach in the government schools. Currently, constitutionally teachers in the primary, junior and senior secondary schools and one tertiary institution are members of KUT. Most of the members are from the primary, followed by junior, then the senior and the tertiary institutions.

Currently the number of members is within the range of 700 to 800.

The membership fee is \$2 per

fortnight and members still enjoy a check off system provided by the Ministry of Finance. The amount received from this fortnightly contribution is just enough to pay for one full time General Secretary who is on a Level 7 scale using the government scale. Monthly rentals, electricity bills and sitting allowances for executive members are also met from the membership fees.

Outreaching Members in Scattered Islands

We only receive assistance from COPE and so far have carried out three outreach programs to one island in the southern part of the country, Beru and two islands in the far end of the northern Kiribati, Abaiang and Butaritari. The visits focused on updating members on current issues the new executives will focus on and at the same time provide fundamental information that are critical to



KUT Youth Delegates to COPE Conference



KUT Capacity Building Workshop which was facilitated by COPE & FTU: Sitting L-R: FTU General Secretary, Minister of Education in Kiribati, COPE SG, KUT General Secretary . Standing: Workshop participants.

the current members. The issues include terms and conditions of services and leave for teachers during school break.

Training our Leaders and Educating Members

There have been two workshops carried out by COPE.

The workshops themselves provided good understandings on what ought to be done. The training programme looked at issue based campaigns. Understanding the ILO Conventions and their application to decent work in Kiribati. It further looked at the SDG Goals and teacher unions roles.

Establishing the Credit Union

This will be the first ever attempt to provide social security to members. Assistance was provided by FTU in setting up a

Credit Union so that members could find a collective way of helping each other to sustainable livelihood of members.

The executive committee has resolved in its last meeting that it will meet again to consolidate their understanding and to see that plans are in the right direction. FTU also agreed to provide training.

Promoting Awareness through the Media

The executive through the General Secretary has written a couple of articles and made radio programs on more critical issues that need to be conveyed for the public's awareness and at the same time getting the message across the target groups: the officials in the Ministry of Education, Housing and Parliament Members.

A round table discussion with the Minister for Education took place where we submitted issues that we consider priority in assisting achieve quality education. Issues include teach-

ers' leave to be taken during school breaks. The campaign also targeted teachers' housing in remote islands as there are no rental houses available in remote areas. The good news is that progress is being made and I thank COPE for the assistance rendered.

The Minister also mentioned in one of his speeches that he is ready to find a space for KUT's office. There is also discussion in progress between the Minister of Labor and the Minister of Lands for land to be made available for KUT to construct an office.

TUVALU TEACHERS ASSOCIATION(TTA)

The TTA is one of the smallest island nation teacher association which has a standing total membership of 255, an increase of more than 60 members from last year. This includes all preschool teachers and support staff. It is expected that more members will join the organisation by the beginning of next year, as some independent ECE teachers have indicated their interest in joining the organization. The drive will be to train these members to become active.

TTA in Tuvalu Education Leadership Workshops.

The introduction of the School Management Programme (SBM) three years ago in the country's education system called for all education stakeholders to develop and maintain four or five year plans called Strategic Plans (SPs), Annual School Improvement Plans (ASIPs) and to establish



Mr. Penehuro Hauma - TTA President

more genuine and effective working partnerships in order to raise and maintain the standard of all levels of education for the citizens of the country.



TTA in MOCK Parliament taking a breather

In developing these plans, all key stakeholders and teachers of schools were called to develop their own vision and mission statements which are to be closely aligned to the National Five Year Plan and the National Plan of the Education Department.

This development introduced a number of intensive awareness and hands-on training programmes for school managers and teachers of all levels in the development and effective management of their school re-

sources. School Managers, Heads of Departments and classroom teachers therefore became the main target groups and beneficiaries of these trainings.

The initial training of teachers focussed on their leadership and management roles as classroom teachers and stewards of all teaching and learning education facilities and resources in their control. The training was extended to the collection and using of assessment data to enhance students' learning. The last part of their on-going workshops focused on how to assess their own professional competency using the 360 method. The outcome of this assessment would help the Government or school managements they serve under to identify individual teacher's training needs.

To accomplish these developments, participants gave up all their term end school holidays to attend special capacity building workshops in the last three years. These intensive trainings even required overnight homework for the teachers to complete for the following days.

Plans to utilise the participants evenings and week-ends for TTA meetings were frustrated by these intensive training requirements.

Primary and secondary school teachers' capacity building trainings that were provided by UNICEF and Australia have almost completed now and the focus now is shifted to the Early Childhood Education level where the World Bank is providing funding support.

TTA Continued to Piggy-

back on Official Visits to Rural Branches.

The Secretary was the only

-to-face links with TTA branches on the outer islands using affordable modern technology.



L-R: TTA Women Coordinator, KUT Women Coordinator, TTA Youth Delegates and TTA General Secretary– Mr. Hauma

official of the organisation who travelled regularly to the outer islands of the country. During these visits she spent time with the Head Teachers, heads of rural schools and TTA branches, to discuss important issues of the organisation. Where time allowed, meeting with all teachers of the branches were held for official education matters and TTA issues.

TTA Challenges are Many

Hold the postponed electronic election of TTA's Executive Members by November 2016.

The incoming office bearers shall review and implement a new constitution by June 2017.

Communication

Communication has always been a massive challenge due to geographical spread of the islands. The union hopes to explore and implement viable alternative communication means to complement the face

Keeping Connected with Members

Activating a more effective method of convincing TTA's young educators that their dues are essential for the effective and productive operations of the TTA remains a real challenge.

However, we have plans to conduct more awareness workshops to raise and promote the involvement and support of the passive members of the organisation next year and in 2018.



Mrs. Kirara Akeimo (Left) of TTA who attended the AEU Young Educators

SAMOA NATIONAL TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (SNTA)

Improved Membership

In August 2013, the SNTA membership was below 50%, however, to date the SNTA has achieved 100% membership of all government teachers and retention of members in the affiliates. Funding from COPE helped the SNTA to achieve full membership for the first time ever. With a much improved membership, the SFS then embarked on a variety of activities to improve conditions of work and salaries especially in light of new reforms by the PSC.

Delivery of Targeted and Support Programmes – Trade Union Training

A two day Young Educators Workshop was also conducted in June 2016. SNTA acknowledges the contributions from Mr. Govind Singh – Secretary General, COPE.

The workshop certainly made a difference in the confidence and the capacity of SNTA and youth leaders to lead SNTA to its maximum capacity.

The SNTA acknowledges the financial assistance from COPE which made it possible for SNTA to undertake the above trainings.

Guide Affiliates in Good Governance and Efficient Management of their Organisations



COPE/FTU SNTA Capacity Building Workshop Participants with COPE SG and FTU General Secretary

Meetings of the SNTA Branch Leaders were held on a quarterly basis to inform members on the progress of activities. During these meetings branch leaders were also trained on negotiating skills as well as strategies to inform members in their own branches on progress of activities.

The SNTA/SFS has also been active in the revival of a trade union centre in Samoa. One of the issues which was identified during the ACTRAV training at the COPE Triennial Conference in August 2013 was the absence of a Trade Union Centre (TUC) in Samoa. A previous attempt to set up a TUC in Samoa in the 1990s had petered out. In its place, the Public Service Association had become a de facto trade union centre but

it also became inactive to the extent that ILO sent a number of missions to Samoa to see what could be done. After the COPE conference in 2013, the SNTA was in the forefront in the establishment of the Samoa Workers Congress in March 2014 and which is now leading the organisation of workers unions in Samoa. Gatoloai Tilianamua Afamasaga became the first President and has been re-elected as President of the Samoa Workers Congress. Alaifea Laititi Belford Su'a, President of the SNTA was elected as the Women's Coordinator for the SWC in 2016/17. The SNTA could now be part of negotiations through the tripartite forum – negotiations between Government – Employers – Workers. The voice of the teachers can be heard through the tripartite forum. The SWC

is starting to hold training on educating union leaders and matters pertaining to negotiations, collective bargaining and effective union leadership.

Salary Improvement for Teachers

SNTA Appreciates Assistance

The SNTA/SFS had achieved a lot and gratitude is expressed to the COPE Executive and Secretary General for the funds that were made available to support some of SNTA's activities. These funds have been beneficial and instrumental in enabling the achievements that the SNTA has achieved.

SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (SINTA)

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Honiara High School on 13th April 2016.

Mr Govind Singh was the Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker at the meeting. The new President Mr Philip Ika Jnr and the Vice President Fr Patterson Tako were elected. The new documents namely SINTA Constitution, SINTA Scheme of Service and SINTA Financial Policies were approved.

Women and Violence

Domestic violence and discrimination against women



Discussion Time

remain high in Solomon Islands societies. Cultural values and practices become hindrances to women in fully exercising their human rights.



Mr. Philp Ika Jnr—SINTA President

SINTA women's network organized several capacity building workshops to enlighten women on their legal rights. There are women who have little knowledge on procedures of dealing with issues affecting them at the work places.

The participants at the workshops included young women teachers, school leaders and men of selected schools in the provinces and in Honiara capital.

Workshops



SINTA Youth Delegates (1st and 2nd from left) accompanied by PNGTA Women Coordinator

Workshop sessions were based on human rights, discrimination against women, domestic violence, child labour and quality education. Women's network invited Ministry of Education officers, Police officers, retired SINTA paralegal trainers and Secretary General of COPE as facilitators of the workshops.

ILO on Child Labour and Trafficking

SINTA women's network attended Child Labour and Trafficking Forum which was organized by ILO in capital Honiara. Research on child labour and trafficking was conducted by selected participants from Government Ministries and non government organizations. The results of child labour and trafficking research were compiled and forwarded to ILO office in Suva.

SINTA Women's Network

New elections of two SINTA provincial branches women's network representatives were conducted, however, majority of the provincial branches are yet to hold

proper elections. The establishment of provincial executive committees should be prioritized by SINTA Secretariat as the way forward for SINTA Women's network to connect and move forward with activities stated in Women's SINTA action plan.

SINTA Women's network has experienced some challenges for the last three years. Positions of provincial women's networks has not been filled due to delay in elections, SINTA action plan is yet to be implemented, geographical spread of the islands, cost and distance hinder visitation of women's network in the provinces.

VANUATU TEACHERS UNION (VTU)

Like the Pacific neighbours VTU is operating in a diverse geographical environment posing immense challenges in organizing and financial sustainability.

COPE/EI is commended for the financial and technical support. The recent BGM of VTU has been possible to finance over 80 delegates and representatives from across the country.

VTU Membership

Following the VTU financial report during 2013 BGM, the organization has increased its membership from 978 to 1,136 teachers according to our recent record from the Government link payroll for VTU Members on July 2016.

The VTU is targeting to recruit 2,000 out of 3324 teachers for



VTU Delegates to 2016 COPE Triennial Conference

its 9th BGM at the end of this year.

Women's Network Receives Assistance

We are greatly indebted to COPE for providing quality training to the National VTU Women's Network. Besides the training by COPE VTU Women's Network conducted a few capacity building workshops on their own led by Ms. Loreen Bani and Ms.

Neselinda.

The women have been encouraged to reach out as much as our resources and time will allow.

Challenges Faced by VTU

The main challenge is to get more youths involved in VTU.

We have recently been through some rough and tough times due to the differences that were left unresolved. Many lessons have been learnt for the future. Recruitment is gradual.

Like others in the region we also face challenges in capacity building and outreach programmes. However, new strategies are being considered.

Work in Progress

A few activities are now in the pipeline and will be acted upon in the near future:

- ♦ Extend the term of operation from Biennial General Meeting to Triennial General Meeting.
- ♦ Negotiations in progress for a housing project for VTU land applicants.
- ♦ Better relationship and understanding with the VTSC regarding teachers' issues.
- ♦ Empowering Women's Network.
- ♦ Strengthening of VTU Sub-Offices.
- ♦ Strengthening of VTU Youth Wing.

2016 Biennial Conference, Port Vila

VTU would like to assure COPE and its affiliates that the recruitment of new members is continuous and results are positive and this is a sign of trust from teachers following the Memorandum of Agreement, the involvement of teachers in the VTU MS&B, has created confidence in the Union. It is an



2016 VTU/SEV BGM Delegates with COPE Secretary General



Ms. Neselinda Meta accepting the JTU Award from El President—Ms. Hopgood Hopgood

opportunity to address teachers welfare during the coming World Teachers' Day on 5th October and the preparation of the VTU 9th Biennial General Meeting in December 2016.

"On behalf of the Vanuatu Teachers' Union National Executive Members, I thank all regional affiliates, COPE and International Union Organization for the continuous and active support", stated President Mr. Firiam.

COOK ISLANDS TEACHERS INSTITUTE (CITI)

The Cook Islands has a strong union tradition, and unions were the precipitate for change in the 1940s that brought about self rule and independence. In 1943 the CIPA or Cook Islands Progressive Association came into existence in Aitutaki and grew out of the need to obtain a better deal for growers and producers of fruit and crops trading with New Zealand and Australia.

Not long after its inception and due to harsh conditions suffered at the hands of workers in Makatea, a

Phosphorous Mine in French Polynesia, they became labour focused. An enquiry was done after concerns were raised from the CIPA that Makatea workers were in slave labour camps, underpaid and overworked.

The CIPA contacted a man in Auckland, who belonged to the Auckland Trade Union and was Secretary of the Browns Bay Branch of the New Zealand Labour Party. His name was Albert Henry.

At Albert Henry's request the Watersiders Union, of which my grandfather Frank Tanner was a member and organiser, the Seamen's Union came out in support of the workers in Makatea. Some trade union officials put pressure on Peter Fraser to do something about the workers conditions. After an inquiry and debate in Government the workers pay was doubled along with substantial improvement in the living and working conditions.

Though Albert Henry raised this incident and received acclaim for the work done for and by the CIPA it would not have been possible without the support and help of men like Pat Potter from the Auckland Labour Union and Alex Drennan from the Watersiders Union were both strong trade unionists in New Zealand.

The CIPA would go on to fight for workers rights,



L-R: President and Women Coordinator of CITI

workers pay and against the monopoly of companies that had paid very little for labour and produce grown in the Cook Islands for a very long time. The CIPA would in time grow to become the Cook Islands Party and in 1965 Albert Henry would become the first Premier of this new democracy.

Reclaiming Rights Workshop

Our aim is to rebuild and to hold the values of Trade Unions in good stead and to encourage our members to engage with their employees and to demand better wages, improve working conditions and to be able to allow the Unions to collectively bargain for the best outcome for them and their families that they support. Trade Unionism is catching its breath as it were, and with the election of the Cook Islands to the ILO has given us tools at our disposal to make this happen.

Not for Profit Quality Public Education

The corporatisation of education and the economic value added to the idea of "bums on

seats” for tertiary and training institutes after secondary school must be resisted. The EI Conference last year addressed this issue again and country after country including the Cook Islands stood in solidarity with this value.

Education must be free and accessible to all students as well as training and an infrastructure that supports and upholds the dignity of the teachers and students in the classrooms. Austerity must never be a rationale for cutting the cost of education or making it a commodity to be sold to the highest bidder. CITI supports these ideals and



Group Discussion in progress

will continue to muster the support from its members to ensure this happens.

NEW ZEALAND TERTIARY EDUCATION UNION (NZTEU) NZTEU TE HAUTŪ KAHURANGI O AOTEAROA



NZTEU Te Hautū Kahurangi o Aotearoa is the union and



CITI President Thomas Wynne, MOE Sec Gail Townsend, COPE Gen Sec Govind Singh, AWT REP Apiti Napa

professional association representing the industrial and professional interests of 10,000 academic and general staff in the tertiary education sector across Aotearoa. NZTEU is the main union in our sector. Our membership includes teachers and workers employed in all occupations in universities, polytechnics, institutes of technology, wānanga, other tertiary education providers and allied organisations. Of the total membership:

9% are te uepū Māori;
53% are women; and
2% are Pasifika.

Collective Agreement

NZTEU members work together collectively to safeguard and enhance our industrial, professional and educational goals, including:

- negotiating collective employment agreements so that you have the best possible pay and working conditions;
- advising and representing you with employment-relationship problems;
- monitoring and acting on issues that affect you in your workplace;

- improving the quality of tertiary education in New Zealand;
- developing specialist research and policy to promote the interests of tertiary education workers; and
- safeguarding the rights of Māori members and meeting the union’s responsibilities to wider Māori communities through the promotion of and adherence to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

We are a democratic union with strong membership participation and governed by an elected council. NZTEU is the union for everybody who works in tertiary education. We are a democratic organisation and we stand up together for what we believe in.

National Women’s Committee, Te Kahurangi Māreikura

Suzanne McNabb is NZTEU women’s officer. Much of her work supports the National Women’s Committee, Te Kahurangi Māreikura (NWC). She supports the Vice-President Cat Pause and helps develop and action much of the

committee's work. The committee has held three face-to-face meetings this year as well as teleconferences. As this was a new committee with new members coming on board, they also held induction training at the beginning of the year.

Living Wage

We have publicly and financially supported the Living Wage campaign and become an accredited Living Wage employer ourselves. Notably, this year the NZTEU branch at Victoria University employed Lyndy McIntyre, who is a community organiser with Living Wage Wellington. She supports community organisations to get active in the Living Wage campaign.



NZTEU Delegates to COPE Triennial

Everywhere around the world where workers have won the Living Wage, they have needed the support of all the diverse groups that make up communities uniting to build a strong voice.

The Victoria University campaign is bringing together students, academics, general staff, cleaners, retired academics, faith groups and alumni for a common cause. One of the offshoots of this has been to make NZTEU much more visible on campus and this has resulted in increased visibility and activism, which in turn has seen a growth in membership. We also support the CTU's Fairness at Work activities and its UnionAID project in which Nanette Cormack is very active.

Insecure Work

Council identified this as a significant area of work arising from our goal to improve pay and conditions in our sector.

One of the results of government underfunding is that more and more of the new jobs created in our institutions are "precarious". This is not a phenomenon

particular to New Zealand. It is a growing global issue that affects workers, societies and economies across the world. Increasingly, employers creating casual jobs means there are people working at two, three and even four jobs in order to make



enough money to live on. We are seeing more of this in the tertiary education sector as the health of the sector survey we commissioned in 2013 bears out.

Consultation of Work Arrangement

Precarious jobs, zero-hour contracts and multiple jobs mean that more people are living on the edges of the economy. Increasingly these people are working in tertiary education. Not only does this impact on the working communities of our institutions – people in part-time and casual work are less likely to engage in the wider communities and activities of our institutions - they are also less likely to join the union. It is not coincidental that employers world-wide are moving to more casualised work arrangements, as they see that the power workers have through unionisation can most easily be diluted. Working people are too afraid to rock the boat in case



Your Right At Work—Worth Fighting For

this endangers the renewal of a fixed-term agreement or the possibility of permanent work. Unions like ours have to respond to this in a meaningful way if we are not to end up only representing a decreasing number of full-time permanent staff.

We undertook a survey last year and drew up an action plan. We developed a workshop and will pilot this at the conference this year. It includes a focus on the experiences of those employed as casuals, their rights at work, and protections in legislation and collective agreements.

Stretching Communities of Learning to Meet Children's Needs

Where we began...

The hard-fought battle by NZEI Te Riu Roa members to retain child-centred education and reject the original "Investing in Success" policy led to an agreement with the



Ministry of Education in July 2015 to develop a new model of Communities of Learning.

The new model was based on the work of the Joint Initiative – a joint NZEI Te Riu Roa- Ministry of Education project that looked at success-

ful examples of transition and collaboration between schools and centres and reviewed relevant national and international literature.

In effect, the IES was redesigned to be more flexible and responsive to children's learning needs, and give communities themselves the ability to design the roles and resourcing required to meet the needs of their own students.

Joint Initiative Phase Two PLD Workstream

Development of a mechanism that would support professionals to access professional expertise, resources and information, to have rich conversations and to feed into the wider PLD redesign.

Support Staff Workstream

Formalising support staff roles, a new career pathway and involvement in leadership structures. Best practice guidelines to be developed with a structured PLD system and recognition of support staff with cultural and language expertise.

Special Education Workstream

Formal recognition of the SENCO (Special Education Needs Coordinator) role to build capacity to respond to the needs of diverse learn-

ers along with PLD that allows for the strategic pooling of resources.

ECE Workstream

Exploring roles and resourcing needed to enable ECE teachers and services to be equitable partners in CoLs. Investigating how existing resources can be accessed by ECE teachers such as resource release time and leadership roles. That registered ECE teachers be resourced as part of a CoL.

Pasifika Workstream

Guidelines and information resources for Pasifika parents, families and communities to be developed and made available in the main Pasifika languages, with Pasifika models of practice for engagement with Pasifika families and communities and made available as a resource for teachers and schools.

Māori Achievement Workstream

The **Māori** Achievement Workstream called for a cultural lens to be applied through an overarching strategy and by influencing key priority areas including: Whakapapa; Communities as contributors to ākonga learning pathways; Tūrangawaewae - place in the world, of belonging; Cultural intelligence

Where we are...

It is clear that the Communities of Learning Model needs to evolve further if it is to improve success for learners with the

most challenges. The primary collective agreements' variations introducing the Community roles included a commitment to jointly review Communities at the end of 2016. This will provide an opportunity to learn from Communities' experiences and ensure the model continues to be more flexible and responsive to learners' needs.

System change

The Government's 2016 Budget in late May froze school and ECE operational funding, this year there was no increase in school operational funding. Instead the government announced plans to target funding to 150,000 children from families that have been on benefits for the last five years or more.



NEW ZEALAND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE (NZEI)

NZEI Te Riu Roa is extremely concerned about the use of data to target individual children, which risks stigmatising those children. Unless funding is increased overall, moving funding in this way is "robbing Peter to pay Paul" could result in learning support to many other children in the system being underfunded

Funding Review

The aim, according to the Min-



ister for Education is to make the system "more needs-driven and outcomes focused." In March 2016, the Prime Minister said discussions were very preliminary and that a "new funding system would not be progressed unless the unions and other stakeholders are on board".

NZEI Te Riu Roa has been clear that any review of the decile system needs to ensure greater equity, not less, and that the major funding issue for schools and ECE is underfunding.

The scope of the review includes staffing, property and subsidies as well as funding.

NEW ZEALAND POST PRIMARY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (NZPPTA)

Equity Funding

We currently have a once in a generation opportunity to achieve equity funding for schools to support those

students that face significant barriers to achievement because of social inequality and educational need.

The Government has instead used the review of educational resourcing to prioritise competition and privatisation. They are proposing a new form of bulk funding (called "the Global Budget") and a narrower definition of "need" for students to access additional funding – so fewer kids will have the benefit of this resource.

A consequence of these policies by the Government is that for the first time ever, both compulsory schooling sector unions in New Zealand are uniting for joint paid union meetings (stop work meetings) to talk to members about the problems with the proposed model and to advocate for an increase in funding in New Zealand schools. There will be 50 meetings across the country over two weeks for over 60,000 teachers, principals and support staff.

Charter Schools and "COOLS"

The Government's privatisation agenda has extended with more charter schools being established and proposed changes to legislation to enable private interest to run online provision in



NZEI Delegates to COPE Conference



Jack Boyle of PPTA during the COPE Triennial Conference

place of schools. The Minister has confessed that this means that this will be funded from within the current education budget – so it takes money away from kids and public schools. Highly controversial and we will be working with our communities to reject this.

PPTA Pasifika Fono 2016 – Talanoa

The PPTA Komiti Pasifika organised a Fono around the theme “Talanoa” this year, and invited many guest speakers and organised workshops on this theme. There was a great attendance, with many finding this conference to be good professional development to better understand the needs of Pasifika students. This included having a culturally-responsive pedagogy and for teachers to work with local communities to find solutions.

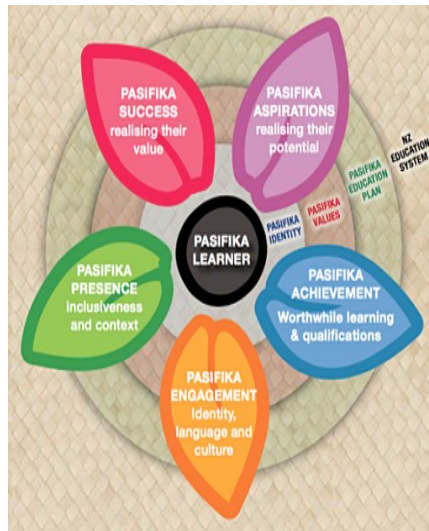
Women’s Network Report

The focus for the PPTA Women’s Network since the last COPE Conference has included:

- * Strengthening the women’s network, including ensuring

that we have women in all of the positions and redesigning the PPTA Women’s Handbook;

- * Campaigning on paid



parental leave – which has resulted in significant increase in who is eligible for paid leave and the amount of time that a parent or primary carer will receive paid leave;

- * Working to ensure that our part-time members receive an equitable allocation of release time from classes so that they are paid for non-teaching responsibilities;
- * Highlighting the issue of domestic violence as a workplace issue;
- * Running workshops with members on leadership and gender equality issues for women.

Workload and Supply of Teachers

Following the ratification of a new collective agreement, we commenced two workstreams with the Ministry of Education on the supply of teachers in secondary sector – which is becoming increasingly pres-

sured.

The relatively low rates of remuneration, particularly for beginning teachers, coupled with burgeoning house prices and increasing workload are barriers for recruitment and retention of teachers in secondary schools.

The increased complexity and quantity of secondary teachers’ work coupled with an ageing workforce (currently the average age of a secondary teacher is over 50 years of age) may be compounding these issues for retention. Unfortunately, an increase of fixed term appointments (which will only get worse under the proposed Global Budget scheme) is doing little to recruit enough new teachers, or stem the flow of teachers leaving the profession.

Currently the Government is doing little about this, except making it easier to recruit untrained teachers to fill the gaps.

The main workload pressures that have been identified through the Working Group are from additional administration (NCEA – our assessment framework for students), increased compliance and new initiatives being in-



PPTA members at the Auckland World Educators Day rally



*Angela Roberts—PPTA President
addressing the COPE Conference*

troduced in schools, and an increase in expectations and use of online and individualised approaches to pedagogy.

The Workload working group is currently meeting and will report to the Minister with recommendations by the end of the year.

JOINT AUSTRALIAN REPORTS

**AUSTRALIAN EDUCA-
TION UNION(AEU),
INDEPENDENT EDU-
CATION UNION
(IEUA)
NATIONAL TERTIARY**



**EDUCATION UN-
ION(NTEU)**

The Australian Education Union (AEU), Independent Education Union (IEU) and National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) begin this joint

country report by paying our respects to the educators of the Pacific and their unions.

Federal Election

The Australian Federal Election on 2 July 2016 saw the return of the Liberal National Party Coalition (conservative) Government led by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, but with a one seat majority.

The Senate (Upper House) is highly problematic for the Government. Prime Minister Turnbull had called a double dissolution (all Senate and House of Representatives) election in part to achieve a less divisive Senate than the previous one which had blocked much of the Government's conservative economic and social agenda. The Senate election result is of particular concern to the Unions providing this report due to the re-emergence of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, with Hanson and at least one other being elected to the Senate. The xenophobic, racist and ill-informed policies of this group will likely negatively skew the debates in our Parliament and the decisions of the Government.

In addition to One Nation Party, the in-coming Senate will include other minor parties and independents as well as the Opposition and Government senators. It has the potential to be as troublesome for the Government as previous Senates in

which the Government of the day has not had a majority of seats.

This has advantages when enough of the cross bench lines up with the Opposition to reject destructive policies such as the deregulation of university fees which twice failed to get through the Senate in the last Parliament.

The public funding of health and school education were significant issues in the election campaign with the gains of seats by the Labor Opposition largely attributed to their strong campaign. There was also a clear but less specific vote against big business tax avoidance and the growing income and prosperity gap across the Australian community.

While not much was said during the election campaign about the rejected anti-worker and anti-union proposed legislation that led to the double dissolution, these proposals appear to remain part of the



*Dancing in a Fijian-Way: NTEU
National I President— Jeannie Rea*



Coalition Government's agenda, and a likely source of contention and division in the new Senate. The union movement remains focused upon organising against this legislation.

Overview of the sectors Early Childhood Education & Care

An air of uncertainty still surrounds the Early Childhood Education and Care sector in Australia. This has been brought about by government decisions that do not guarantee the long term funding of universal access to pre-school for four year olds. While funding agreements have been signed between the Federal Government and the state and territory governments up until the end of 2017, funding is not guaranteed beyond this time.

Coupled with this is the yet to be legislated Jobs for Families package that the Federal Government hopes to have fully implemented by July 2018. The Jobs for Families package was developed after a Productivity Commission inquiry with limited terms of reference that did not focus on child-centred programs, but on returning parents and

carers to the workforce. As much of the funding of the package was linked to savings achieved by stopping other family payments, there have been difficulties in getting the legislation passed in the parliament.

The Jobs for Families package, which provides subsidised childcare, has a focus on getting people - predominantly mothers - back into work. This is in contrast to focussing on the early education of children. Parents wishing to avail themselves of the package will be required to pass an activity test and the number of hours spent working, looking for work, studying or volunteering will determine the number of subsidised hours a child can attend childcare. For families with low incomes, who do not meet the activity test, up to 24 hours of childcare per fortnight will be provided. For many, this will mean that the neediest children will only have access to one day of early education and care a week as childcare centres predominantly take bookings using a daily rate and not an hourly rate.

With a government that is totally focussed on GDP, rather than looking at the long-term benefits of providing high quality early childhood education and care, the ECEC sector will continue to struggle to receive the recognition it deserves.

Schools and Funding

After the Coalition Government elected in 2013 reneged on its "unity ticket" with the Opposition on funding Gonski, the AEU ramped up campaigning efforts across the nation. The constant focus on needs-based funding, and the demonstration of the successes achieved in schools where the funding was flowing, created a powerful impetus for public support of the funding campaign. Politicians, parents, and the public got involved in the "I Give A Gonski" campaign, and the tagline was well-recognised and understood by the time of the 2016 Federal Election.

The AEU employed Gonski Co-ordinators in 16 marginal electorates across the nation, and set them the task of building the campaign locally, through work with schools, school communities and supportive community groups. Opinion-polling showed consistently high support across all groups for implementation of the "full Gonski", that is, for the Federal Government to commit to funding all 6 years of the program, instead of the first 4 years only, as is currently the case.



Lobbying for Gonski



Both the ALP and The Greens campaigned on a platform of implementing the full Gonski.

The re-election of a Coalition Government creates uncertainty about the future funding arrangements for the schools sector. With exit-polling from Election day placing education funding in the top 3 issues for a majority of voters, and considering the narrow margin by which the Coalition has won office, the AEU will argue that there is no mandate to abandon Gonski, and will continue to campaign and press the Coalition continue its implementation.

Higher Education

The Coalition Government has actively targeted higher education through an agenda that would see further widespread funding cuts to public universities, a push to increase the levels of corporatisation and commercialisation in teaching and research, increased debt burdens on students, and the opening up of public subsidies to private providers. The NTEU has mobi-

lised against these changes, encapsulated in our popular "No \$100,000 Degrees" campaign.

The growth of public opposition to the Coalition plan for universities, as well as other proposed changes, saw both a change of both the Minister for Education and Prime Minister during the term of the last government. The Government sought to side-line full fee deregulation in the recent federal election campaign, but a white paper released just prior to the election made clear that they still intend to implement much of their original agenda to privatise and commercialise higher education.

Industrial Rights

The re-elected Coalition Government intends to pursue its anti-union and anti-worker agenda, where the legitimacy of unions is continually under attack. While any major legislative changes will have trouble getting through an antagonistic Senate, the ideological anti-union rhetoric will continue building upon the *Royal Commission into Trade Union Corruption*, which despite running nearly two years and costing over AUD\$45 million, was unable to uncover much at all. Despite this outcome, the reputational damage to the trade union movement is significant as we are all tainted with the same brush - including the education unions, even

though we are renowned for our independence, transparency and good governance.

Additionally, corporations, often backed by government, continue to seek to break unions through very costly legal cases. The mass media continues to support the bosses against workers.

A current major plank of the Coalition and business attack on workers is on penalty rates – paid to those working out-of-ordinary hours from waiters to nurses to farm labourers. Penalty rates make the differences between just existing from week to week and actually living for especially low paid workers.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) continues to advocate for improvements to Workplace Relations Act in terms of conditions of work, but also the right to organise and take industrial action. The power of Australian unions is circumscribed by industrial action being illegal outside of when a new collective agreement is being negotiated and then there are still onerous provisions.

While the education unions are still strong, along with nurses and the public sector, the trade union movement is facing a crisis of membership and density, especially in the private sector. This is due to both the collapse of manufacturing, and low unionisation in new sectors. Women are now joining unions at a faster rate than men, and will become the majority of union members soon. This is both a reflection of women's dominance in education and health jobs, and the disappearance of traditional male, full time, secure jobs. There is little to celebrate in greater gender eq-



IEU delegates with FTU General Secretary

uity in unions or the workforce if decent secure jobs are declining and income gaps increasing. However, it does mean that unions ignore the issues that matter to women at their peril.

Insecure Work

More than forty percent of the Australian workforce are now in insecure jobs. This is a dramatic change, and as traditional full time unionised jobs disappear they are replaced with part-time, casual, outsourced, and short term contract jobs. The consequence is that workers have no security of income and are unable to invest in homes and families.

Education at all levels is struggling with increasing casualisation and fixed term contracts. Such working conditions discourage the younger generation of educators from remaining in teaching. The post-secondary level is particularly hard hit, with casualisation rife. Official

are on short fixed term contracts. This is unsustainable both for the people involved, and the quality of education and research, as there is a lack of ongoing intellectual and skill investment. Classes are being pushed online to the detriment of students needing the interaction of the physical classrooms.

Consequently, for all education unions, advocating for greater resource investment in education by governments is a priority, along with vigorous industrial negotiations to improve the wages and conditions of insecurely employed staff, as well as conversion to ongoing work.

Domestic Violence Leave

The period since the last report has seen significant movement in public awareness and action about the scourge of domestic violence. A high profile survivor of family violence, Rosie Batty, was named Australian of the Year in 2015. In the state of Victoria, the government implemented a Royal Commission into Family Violence and com-

data reveals that four out of five teaching academics are employed casually and four out of five research academics

mitted to implementing all of its recommendations.

Australian Unions have worked closely with Rosie Batty and with community organisations against domestic/family violence and male violence against women. Most importantly, Australian unions have successfully made workplaces a site for combating domestic violence and supporting those dealing with its consequences. In Australia,

- ♦ violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness of women aged 15 to 44 years.
- ♦ one in three women experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime.
- ♦ after financial difficulty, domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness, with women and children still being forced to flee the family home in the majority of cases.

Australia is now at the forefront internationally in treating domestic, family and partner violence as not only a societal issue, but as an industrial and economic issue. As a result, over 1.6 million workers in Australia now have access to paid domestic violence leave in union negotiated workplace agreements. We note that the push to address domestic, family and partner violence through workplace sanctions is now also being taken up internationally





At the COPE Conference

and by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) is making a submission to the Fair Work Commission to have 10 days of paid leave to support women impacted by domestic violence added to the Modern Award Safety net, making it available to all award reliant workers. The paid leave is designed to help women deal with the practical challenges of escaping violence, such as attending court or accessing support services, without losing their paid work.

The AEU, IEU and NTEU have been successful in negotiating specific clauses in a number of industrial agreements to support our members, their families and support networks, who may be victims of domestic violence. To illustrate, the NTEU has formulated a comprehensive mandatory domestic and family violence leave claim, which has been adopted in various forms at most universities. Central to the NTEU's claim is the provision for dedicated leave of up to 20 days for all staff (including casual staff) to deal with matters arising as a result of domestic violence; the provision of appropriate support for staff impacted by do-

mestic violence including workplace safety; appropriate training for those designated as contacts for staff needing to

access domestic violence support and leave; and access to flexible working arrangements for staff affected by domestic violence. Research is now underway to assess the effectiveness of these provisions.

Attacks on Paid Parental Leave

Previous reports to COPE have outlined the Australian union movement's success in implementing a Commonwealth Paid Parental Leave scheme of 18 weeks' pay at the minimum wage. This scheme was designed to complement workplace-based entitlements gained over time through enterprise bargaining.

In recent times, the Coalition government has attempted to wind back the scheme by restricting access to it for women who also have workplace entitlements. This has been a direct attack on unions and women union members as those workplaces where women had an entitlement to paid parental leave were overwhelmingly workplaces where unions had negotiated an enterprise agreement. In an attempt to find budget savings, the Government an-

nounced on Mothers' Day 2015 that it would stop access to the government-funded component of paid parental leave if workers also had an employer-funded component. Mothers who accessed both schemes in accordance with the scheme's design were called "rorters" who were "double-dipping."

The AEU, IEU and the NTEU members joined with other unions to fight to protect this hard won right for our women members. After concerted lobbying, the proposed legislation was blocked by the Opposition parties and some independent Senators in October 2015. Undeterred, the LNP Government included the cuts to Paid Parental Leave in its 2016 Budget and in their policy platform for re-election. However, we remain optimistic that with ongoing public advocacy the new Senate will also reject the government's plans to turn the clock back on



women's workplace rights.

Union-building in the Education Sector

The AEU, IEU and NTEU each have an on-going focus on recruitment and retention of members. While membership numbers are healthy when measured against the overall national density of union mem-



bership, the education unions each face challenges in recruiting new members – particularly among casual and contract workers, and the loss of members through cuts to programs and contraction across the sector.

New Educator Programs

In the schools' sector, the AEU and IEU conduct a range of New Educator support programs through individual Branches of the union. Targeted at teachers in their first 5 years of service, these activities address both the professional and industrial aspects of teaching, aiming to support new educators to become proficient professionals, as well as active members of the union. Since 2010, the AEU has conducted an annual New Educator's Conference, to provide an opportunity for New Educators to gather at a national level. This perspective is always enriched by the attendance of NZEI, NZPPTA, and 2 representatives nominated by COPE, who participate in the conference and provide input about teaching and related issues that they face.

Academic Freedom & Freedom of Speech

Academic freedom is a privilege and responsibility of academic teachers and researchers to fearlessly tackle difficult and controversial questions and provide evidence-based, informed opinion. However, even in Australia, freedom of intellectual inquiry - while enshrined in legislation - is under more consistent attack from right-wing commentators, politicians and vested interests. Current concerns include politicians calling for the dismissal of academics with whom they disagree; constant vilification in the media; and threats to withdraw government and industry grants if academics persist with disagreeable research and reporting. It is a disgrace that climate change scientists have been physically threatened for stating what is accepted as fact internationally. Education workers enjoy the same rights to freedom of speech as other workers, again enshrined in legislation, and yet the right to responsibly express an opinion in the public sphere is continually contested.

One high profile case this year involved a university seeking to silence and dismiss a staff member for a post on her private Facebook page. With union support and massive public reaction - especially through social media - the charges were withdrawn. However, the impact of this kind of occurrence is that academics are increasingly reticent

about speaking publicly or even contesting controversial matters in their teaching or research.

While Australian academics and other educators do not face the persecution that many of our colleagues do around the world, we consider it our duty to continue to practice and advocate academic freedom and freedom of expression.



Closing the Gap in Indigenous Education

In 2006 Australia's peak Indigenous and non-Indigenous health bodies, non-government organisations and human rights organisations initiated the Close the Gap campaign to achieve equality for health and life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2030. This campaign was deemed necessary as the life expectancy gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is one of the greatest in the world.

As a response to the campaign, in 2008, all Australian governments agreed on six





Christine Cooper and Chris Watt of IEU

closing the gap targets. Four of these targets focussed on early childhood/education and two targets were directed towards health/medical goals. A further education target related to school attendance was added in 2014.

With the 10th anniversary of the Close the Gap campaign being marked in March 2016, the Prime Minister's Closing the Gap Report (2016) shows that little progress has been achieved in the past 12 months and only two targets are on track to be met. These two goals are to halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five years of age by 2018 and to halve the gap in Indigenous Australians aged 20-24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

Progress will need to accelerate

for targets to be met in closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance by 2018, and to halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for Indigenous students by 2018. The 2016 report shows that there has been little change in Indigenous school attendance and while four of the education achievement goals are on track the rate of progress in Year 3 reading and numeracy, Year 5 reading and Year 9 reading is not currently fast enough for the target to be realised.

There has been limited or no progress in achieving the targets for closing the gap in life expectancy within a generation (2031), or for closing the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2018. Both of these targets are marked as not on track. The last target - that ninety-five per cent of all Indigenous four year olds will be enrolled in early childhood education - has had the target achievement date reset to 2025, after it failed to meet the original target date of 2013.



The participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people in higher education has increased due to dedicated programs of recruitment and support, as well as the efforts of the students themselves. Universities still remain large and alienating institutions for Indigenous students and staff, with a NTEU survey amongst our members reporting that over two thirds experienced racism and discrimination at work.

NTEU has successfully made employment of Australian Indigenous people an industrial priority and a top order of business in collective bargaining negotiations. This, more than any good intentions or well-meaning speeches, has led to increased numbers of Indigenous academic and general staff in universities, along with language allowances, cultural leave and senior appointments. However, ongoing staffing cuts and increased casual and fixed term contract jobs are also adversely impacting upon numbers. We are still to reach population parity. The evidence is clear that there must be community confidence in universities for Indigenous students or staff to enter or remain in higher education. The mainstreaming agenda in universities of closing down specialist Indige-





Let Them Stay Campaign

nous programs and centres is also having a negative impact, but on the positive side, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders continue to increase their numbers holding doctorates.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO COPE TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2016

"Towards the 2030 Education Agenda and Framework for Action: A New Vision for Education"

**Susan Hopgood, President,
Education International**

Colleagues, Distinguished Guests, Sisters and Brothers, I'm honoured to address you and convey greetings on behalf of Education International, your global federation of education unions. It's reassuring that no matter where in the world we come from we can come together at conferences such as this one to connect, to share, to learn and to grow.

In Education International we bring together some 32 million educators in 171 countries; they are members of 400 education unions, each with their own history, aspirations and characteristics, but all united in the belief that education, quality

public education is the key to a better future for our children, for our communities, for our countries, and united also in our determination to improve the status of teachers, to raise professional standards, and to protect our rights and freedoms.

Through our Unite for Quality Education campaign, we have been calling on governments and the international community to build a better future for all through quality education.

Our quest for a standalone education goal in the new global development strategy was realized, when in September 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Replacing the Millennium Development Goals, the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) commit to end poverty and hunger, ensure quality education and health, gender equality and

decent work for all, while protecting forests and oceans, and combating climate change.

Meeting as we are in the South Pacific, I feel it is important that I open my remarks addressing the issue of climate change. Colleagues, climate change is one of the greatest threats facing our planet. You don't need me to highlight the impact of climate change on our region as many of you are already experiencing its impact. Last year, government leaders from all over the world signed the Paris Agreement, which will regulate international climate action from 2020 onwards. Whilst still inadequate, they committed to staying below 2°C in average temperature increase. Combatting climate change will also require a change in production and consumption patterns and national emission reduction objectives.

Education is a powerful tool for raising awareness about the global climate emergency and for combatting climate change.

Turning back more specific-



El President, Ms. Susan Hopgood, delivering her keynote address to COPE delegates while opening the 2016 Triennial Conference

ly to the SDGs, we clearly welcome the adoption of a standalone sustainable development goal on quality education. Three years ago, it was far from certain that the UN would include education as a standalone goal in the post-2015 development agenda. But they finally did. Thanks to EI and all member organisations' advocacy efforts!

SDG 4 commits to: *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.* This means governments should guarantee access to quality education from birth and ensure learning opportunities for all throughout life. Through the first target of SDG 4, governments commit to ensure that all girls and boys complete **free**, equitable and quality primary and secondary education. The education targets also commit to quality early childhood education, vocational education and training, higher education, literacy and numeracy, gender

equality, skills for sustainable development, provision of adequate educational facilities and increase in the supply of qualified teachers.

SDG 4 and its targets are further articulated in the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Education, adopted by UNESCO and the global education community in Incheon, South Korea, and Paris, France, in May and November 2015, respectively.

Through these instruments, the education community agreed on one collective vision: to transform lives through education. This vision is inspired by a humanistic approach to education and development based on human rights and dignity, social justice, inclusion, protection, cultural and linguistic diversity, and shared responsibility and accountability.

The Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action re-



Samoa College present their take on SDG 4 - Quality Education.

affirm EI's long standing view that education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a key driver of development, and, therefore, a catalyst for the achievement of all the other SDGs. We all know about the enormous power of education in preparing young people for life, and in equipping them with skills for employment and decent work.

Colleagues, the commitments made by our governments, through the SDGs, the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action are already under threat.

This leads me to the global debate about the future of educa-



COPE Conference Keynote Speakers: (L-R) Mr. Sasaki (ILO), Mr. Felix Anthony (FTUC), Ms. Angela Roberts (PPTA), Angelo Gavrielatos (EI Project Director)



Henry Rajendra of AEU on
Peace, Unity & Change

tion, one that involves two competing educational visions, and all of you here are in the very middle of that debate.

The first vision is grounded in the understanding that without government funded, free quality education and highly qualified, well supported and remunerated teachers and education support personnel, there is no chance of every child and young person getting the education they deserve. Neither is there much chance of countries having stable societies or sustainable economies.

The second vision is sustained by the illusion that education can be delivered more cheaply and efficiently by the free market, preferably with fewer, less qualified staff and a liberal dose of one-size-fits-all online programmes and standardised testing.

I think that we can all agree that the commercialization and privatization of education is not our vision.

In fact the commercialisation and privatisation of education, represents the greatest threat to the achievement of quality

education for all. It is giving more and more prominence to education as a commodity, a private, positional good as opposed to a public, societal good; it is undermining social cohesion and democracy.

Colleagues, noting the dimension and the threat to students, teachers, education support personnel and quality public education for all posed by the ongoing commercialisation and privatisation of education, it was of no surprise that the last World Congress resolved that we need a global response to the rapidly expanding for-profit corporate sector involvement in education. Whilst this carries on from EI's existing work on privatisation and Member Organisation national campaigns focused on privatisation, the *Global Response to the Commercialisation and Privatisation in and of Education* aims to draw these efforts together with a view to delivering a stronger more focused response by harnessing collective energy and influence.

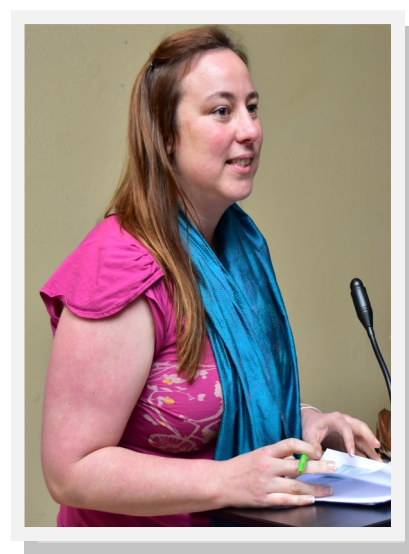
The Global Response aims to put the spotlight on the involvement of education corporations in various aspects of education governance, as well as the sale and provision of for-profit education and education services, such as standardised testing, curricula and teacher evaluation tools and support for the introduction and expansion of the so-called low fee for-profit private schools.

Having identified the lucrative nature of the education market, and in particular how much the limitless, sustainable resource of children, our

students, and their education represents, global education corporations/edu-businesses have set about trying to influence and control education in order to satisfy their profit motives.

However, the Global Response very importantly also focuses on governments, which in too many cases, are abrogating their obligations to ensuring that every child, every student has access to a high quality free public education by failing to invest adequate resources in education. That is why we call on governments to come up with a legislative and financing framework for the attainment of the new education SDG and its targets.

Friends, colleagues we are often told about a financing gap. However I put it to you that **the only gap in existence is the gap of political will**. The argument that we cannot afford flourishing public school systems is false. There is enough money, but it's stowed away in the wrong places. The failure of governments to fulfill their primary obligation to cur-



Eva Sanders of PPTA presenting
Safer Schools to COPE
Delegates



Mr. Anthony Unfolding the Workers Rights in Fiji

rent and future generations of students by adequately funding and resourcing public education of the highest quality requires a renewed and determined response.

We must demand that governments allocate at least 6% of GDP and/or at least 20% of their national budget to education. Development partners and rich countries must support low-income countries which cannot mobilise sufficient resources locally. For that to happen, all donor countries should allocate at least 0.7 of their GNI to Official Development Assistance (ODA) and ensure that at least 10% of it goes to education.

Beyond this governments and the international community must take on the cancer of tax exemptions, avoidance, and outright tax evasion. Here are some statistics to illustrate the point:

- ◆ The richest 62 individuals have same wealth as the poorest 3.6 billion people.
- ◆ The richest 1% earns more than the ENTIRE rest of the world!
- ◆ The 10 richest people in Africa have a combined

wealth of Kenya's GDP.

- ◆ The cash holdings alone of 25 companies is \$387 billion

◆ There is a hidden network of hidden wealth courtesy of tax havens and tax exemptions allowed and facilitated by governments.

Here are some more startling statistics:

- ◆ Money in tax havens could send every child to school.
- ◆ Some \$7.6 trillion of individual wealth is in tax havens.
- ◆ It is estimated that developing countries lose **US\$139 billion a year** just from one form of tax incentive – corporate income tax exemptions, or nearly US\$3 billion each week. In just over two months, if channelled to where it is most needed, this could fill the annual global finance gap for basic education.
- ◆ It is estimated that in excess of \$100 billion is lost annually due to tax avoidance. If 20% of this was spent on education, it would be enough to cover half of the global resource gap to get all children into primary and lower secondary school, estimated at US\$ 39 billion.
- ◆ Due to Australian-based multinational corporations shifting profits to tax ha-

vens, PNG loses around USD\$12 million in tax revenue annually.

Significant improvements in a county's revenue base and adequate funding will not only ensure quality education and safe learning environments for all students but also decent working conditions for teachers and the entire education workforce.

Colleagues, the 2030 Education agenda is also threatened by a narrow focus on standardised assessment, test scores, competition and the publication of league tables. The proponents of this myopic view of education, tell us that if you want to improve the quality of education you should make sure that schools, teachers and students compete. For them, quality education means high mathematics and reading test scores and nothing else. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Our countries' vision of quality education should be bold, broad and ambitious, and go beyond a narrow focus on testing. It should include quality inputs, quality teaching and learning and quality outcomes. A wide range of outcomes, in-



TEU Delegates to COPE Conference



Rhonda Natapei of VTU speaks during the Triennial Conference Opening

cluding literacy and numeracy, problem solving skills, innovation and creativity are essential in preparing young people for life. Rather than place over-emphasis on standardised tests and international comparisons, governments be achieved without adequate investment in teachers. Through the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, governments committed to enshoud strengthen formative assessments and support measures that lead to the improvement of teaching and learning.

I remind you of the landmark UNESCO Report *Learning: the Treasure Within*, we are given that broader vision of education. The four pillars of learning: Learning to know; Learning to do; Learning to be; and Learning to live together.

Of course, education goal SDG 4, cannot sure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally-qualified, motivated and supported, within well-

resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems. In addition, governments committed to improve social dialogue with teachers and their organisations.

Which brings me to the status of our profession. Worldwide, with some notable exceptions, teachers are increasingly working on limited and fixed term contracts; they earn salaries often below the average wage; their workload is increasing; their professional space is shrinking; their autonomy is challenged; their access to professional development is limited; and they often lack the qualifications, skills, support, and learning materials to teach and teach well. These are the signs of de-professionalisation, our most serious challenge related to the status of the teaching profession today.

EI's message is that teachers must regain control over their profession, and that education unions must reinforce their role as the profession's guardians. There is no contradiction between our trade union and professional aspirations. They are complementary. Learning conditions and working conditions are inextricably linked. Yes, we are Professional Unions.

EI is taking the lead in strengthening the status of our noble profession. We are in the process of developing international

guidelines on professional teaching standards. We are also setting up a global online network of teachers and educators. This will enable classroom teachers and other practitioners to share knowledge, information, experiences and resources, thus improving teaching and learning.

We must demand that Governments' fulfill their obligation to respect teachers' human and trade union rights, including freedom of association, the right to organise and collectively bargain. These rights continue to be violated in far too many countries around the world. Unfortunately, our region has not been immune to these human rights violations. Many teachers and union leaders have been targeted simply because they were exercising their basic human and trade union rights. We deplore these heinous acts and call upon governments to respect and uphold international human rights law and labour standards.

Respecting teachers also means giving them adequate remuneration, yet teacher salaries and



Ms. Hopgood with Felix Anthony of FTUC and Mr. Singh of FTU

working conditions remain relatively low. In line with the provisions of the ILO/UNESCO recommendations on teachers, we call on governments to ensure that teacher salaries and conditions are no less than those of professionals with similar qualifications in the rest of the public service or other sectors.



SNTA Youth and Women Delegate during the COPE triennial opening

Effective and continuous dialogue between governments and education unions is critical to improving education and teacher policies and programmes. However, educators from around the world including Fiji who participated in an EFA assessment conducted by EI in 2014 and 2015 have told us that conditions for social dialogue have deteriorated since 2000.

Our assessment reveals that the vast majority of education workers, 82% of them, were not consulted on decisions affecting their professional lives. If governments are serious about improving the quality of education and achieving harmonious working relations in the education sector, they should engage in genuine social and policy dialogue with educators and their unions.

Colleagues, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers. As we commemorate this important milestone in the life of the Recommendation, let us continue to remind governments to implement the provisions of this instrument and those of the 1997

Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel. On World Teachers' Day, we will be reminding governments, employers and other stakeholders to value teachers and to improve their professional status and working conditions.

Colleagues, we demanded a standalone education goal from the UN and we got it. Now it is time to demand its full implementation from our governments. What can our unions do to achieve this goal? Here are my suggestions:

◇ *Tell your membership about Education 2030*
Inform your leaders and

members about SDGs, goal 4 on quality education and its targets, and the need for the union to play an active role in holding your government accountable for the commitments they have made.

◇ *Set your priorities*
Agree on the most urgent SDGs and education targets for your country and come up with a union strategy for persuading your government to achieve those priorities.

◇ *Demand your right to participate*
Approach your govern-



L-R: FTU Women Coordinator-Mrs. Vidya Singh, Mr. Varunesh and Mr. Raghuwaiya of AUSPS

ment to discuss how the education goal and targets can be integrated into your national education policies, plans and programmes, implemented and monitored. Include SDGs, education targets and teacher professional issues in your regular dialogue with the government.

- ◇ *Insist on the integration of SDGs into national plans*
Demand the integration of Education 2030 targets into national education plans and programmes. To ensure successful implementation, insist on the enactment of relevant legislative frameworks by the government.
- ◇ *Demand adequate investment in education and teachers*
One of the key lessons learnt from the MDGs and EFA is that none of the SDGs will be achieved without adequate domestic investment in education. Urge your Government to honour international bench-

marks for education financing.

- ◇ *Be a watchdog*
Monitor implementation, analyse the impact of government policies and funding, and share your version of what is happening. Mobilise your members to share their stories: it is crucial that the unique insights into the classroom reality of teachers and education support personnel are reflected in the monitoring and evaluation of the new agenda.
- ◇ *Find allies and build alliances*
Build alliances with likeminded civil society organisations, trade unions, youth groups, parents and other stakeholders.

The 15-year global development journey towards 2030 has commenced. Governments and the international community should avoid repeating the mistakes of the past – broken promises and failures; failure to invest in education and teachers.

Come 2030, we should not be talking about the unfinished business of SDGs, but about inclusive quality education for all children, youth and adults.

We will only be successful if all governments and the international community talk and walk the talk. Governments should demonstrate clear political will and commitment through concrete policy, legislative, financing and other measures to ensure successful implementation of the teacher target and the education goal in its entirety.

We, as the teachers of the world, united under the banner of Education International, must, and will continue to organise and mobilise our members, efforts and resources towards building a better future through quality education. We can do it! And we will.

I am very pleased to declare this COPE Triennial Conference 2016 open.

Thank you.

