

**GOVERNMENT OF TOKELAU
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

National Curriculum Policy Framework

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FOREWORD

The education policy and planning development for Tokelau began with a series of consultation with the Taupulega and community of each nuku. The consultation feedback was very clear about the type of society the people of Tokelau desired, the relationship between education, culture and development, what should be continued and what should be changed in education to promote those aspirations. Policies needed to overcome constraints were identified.

Policy formulation has been at two levels; (1) The Tokelau National Education Plan, and (2) The Tokelau National Curriculum Framework. The primary focus was to bring coherence to education planning and strategies in support of the goals of education for sustainable development of Tokelau.

Sustainable development for Tokelau is people-centred and requires a holistic approach which involves the interdependence of economic, intellectual, political, environmental and cultural dimensions in making policies and plans for the future of its people. The National Curriculum Framework is built on the interdependence of these elements. It is consistent with local community aspirations, and is intended to enable quality practice to be deployed at school level.

The consultations were followed by an intensive programme of policy development workshops with Tokelau educators from each nuku, in Apia on November and December 2004.

This document is the National Curriculum Policy Framework for Tokelau and is the outcome of those workshops. The policy developers have consistently built on the consultation feedback in policy formulation, and evaluation.

Decisions on the content of the policies drew extensively on the collective views of the people of Tokelau and experience of their educators. The policies are therefore rooted in Tokelau needs and aspirations.

This document has been prepared by the Tokelau Department of Education. The Tokelau version of the document has been made possible by the commitment and the professional competence of a small group of translators who worked tirelessly to produce a translation that was of exemplary quality, maintaining accuracy, clarity and naturalness whilst ensuring the sustainability of Tokelau language.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tokelau comprises three atolls with a total land area of 12 square kilometres and a population of 1518 as recorded in the October 2001 census. Tokelau has a dual economy consisting of a recently established cash economy that sits alongside a subsistence economy of traditional cooperative work and the inati system based on the principle of sharing traditional wealth, sharing of village assets and produce. Tokelau is relatively isolated where the only means of transport is by sea. Tokelau culture is vibrant and the social institutions of society are robust in spite of its economic limitations and isolation. Geographically and economically Tokelau is vulnerable to environmental and economic changes.

In recent years Tokelau has been preparing for self-government. Its vision is “*our people improving the quality of their lives living on Tokelau*”.

Within this context education needs to be people-focused and relevant to the socio-economic, cultural and development needs of Tokelau. The curriculum plays a major role within this setting by ensuring that it is relevant to local, national, and international needs. It should equip the population of Tokelau with the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes to maximise the opportunities that are available to them both locally and internationally. It should sustain families, communities and their livelihoods in an environment that embraces the notions of lifelong learning and sustainable development.

This National Curriculum Framework provides the official policies to guide curriculum development and implementation for all years of schooling. It is built on Tokelau’s philosophy of education whilst embracing the knowledge, skills and values that are necessary for individuals and communities to rethink and adjust lifestyles to achieve a sustainable future on the atolls.

2.0 TOKELAU PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The people of Tokelau developed their own unique ways of adapting to both their physical and social environments before the arrival of Western visitors. These interactions resulted in a cultural knowledge that enabled them to live and survived within these particular contexts.

The senior elders have always been regarded as guardians and keepers of culture and tradition for generations. The senior female members also play important roles as invaluable sources of that knowledge. When one deviates from community norms, he or she would be reminded of this saying:

Uhu ki Afaga fakananunanu ai (Attend to Afaga discussions)

Taliga fakalogo mai (With attentive ears)

This serves as a reminder and an advice for people to attend the gathering place of the elders and to learn from listening to the various issues being discussed there. *Fakananunanu* in a sense connotes the concepts of discussion, sharing, modification, trial, ongoing evaluation and change. It reflects the various processes used in the production of the pearl-shell lure to achieve its desired shape and hues.

Fakananunanu then is used here as a strategy with a number of processes around which most aspects of Tokelauan knowledge revolved. *Afaga* was a symbol of the authoritative knowledge of

elders gathered and engaged in daily discussions. These were the people who in the past held the knowledge about their god Tui-Tokelau whom they much depended for their daily sustenance. Knowledge about the cosmology, the lunar cycles, fishing lore, weaving, carving, kinship structures and taboos would have emanated from these discussions. The wisdom gained from *Afaga* discussion came to be regarded as a collective construction representing community norms and values.

Association of Knowledge and Practice

Learning skills and the associated knowledge in the correct way was always stressed because of the potential dire consequences of inaccurate, incomplete or partial learning. Skills were transmitted orally and reinforced through demonstrations and on-going observations as reflected in tales and myths.

Context of Learning and Knowledge Transmission

In the transmission of knowledge, informants regularly support or reinforce their instructions with statements like: *ko na kupu a na tupuna, matua, tamana* (the word of our ancestors, parents, fathers). The collectivity of knowledge aims for the benefit of the whole community as reflected in phrases such as: *he mafua ma tamaiti* (provisions, catch for children). *Mafua* in this sense generally refers to anything that can benefit the children be it food resources, advanced education or productive services.

The first place of learning is the home where each child learns to take his/her place in relation to members of his/her family and to the wider community. Myths and legends are also introduced at an early age, usually by grandparents or senior male and female relatives. As children grow older the sites of learning extend to include the whole village surroundings, regular trips to the *malae* (site for collective sharing) provide them with knowledge of the organizations of the *inati* (sharing) system.

Family Foundation

Over time, the children's gender roles become more explicit. A girl learns to take up her place at home to become its *fatupaepae* (lit. foundation stone), who also has the right to reside. The main role for a *fatupaepae* is to ensure that family resources are fairly distributed among its members.

Providers

A boy takes a different path, learning the skills needed in preparation for his future role as provider not only for his family but also for the community. The skills most needed are those that enable him to be an effective *kafaga* (planter, cultivator and harvester of produce), *tufuga* (builder of houses and canoes) and *tautai* (fisherman).

Learning Processes

There were no places built especially for 'formal' learning, but there were recognizable sites within the environment in which knowledge was transmitted. There is no set order in which these processes occur for they are inconsequential, interchangeable, and sometimes accidental, depending on the situation and context.

Learning by Observation

Observation enables the learner to gain an understanding of the different aspects of Tokelau life. In many contexts learners are allowed to ask questions or express an opinion but in some, there is no questioning time. Learning to weave, to carve or one's genealogy allows a lot of questioning. This is quite a contrast with *takiulu* (snaring wahoo) where one must learn and observe in silence.

Learning by Verbal Instruction

The sea environment inside and outside the reef is filled with different fishing grounds of varying sizes and structures, unmapped, but individually imagined and named. In locating a special proper fishing ground, some of the verbal instructions include the following information: the time of year, the ocean current, the distance from shore, the right depth, its imagined boundaries and landmarks for dead reckoning. Learners not only listen but make many attempts to locate and exploit these sites for successful fishing.

Learning by Listening

In learning a *fakanau*, a prayer-like chant which are recited as part of fishing, a novice needs to listen very carefully as some chants are recited in a whispering-like voice, and must refrain from asking questions which will disrupt the flow of the narration. *Fakanau* has many functions; through their recitation, learners will be kept alert throughout and be possessed with a feeling of *amanaki* (good expectations of success).

Learning by Demonstration

The highest skill involved in *takiulu* is the snaring part. A learner can only acquire *kaukumete* (credential) status after demonstrating the skills involved. He must precisely time and place the baits luring and maneuvering the fish in an angle that makes it enter the noose, and in a way that it does not leap from the water into one of the crew.

The examples used are drawn from fishing experiences but, they all serve to demonstrate transmission of knowledge, the learning processes involved, and the assessment procedures in any Tokelau context. The traditional forms and processes of Tokelau knowledge still exist but have been subject to changes through time.

3.0 THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

3.1 The Tokelau Curriculum

The national curriculum for Tokelau is a documented statement of the required learning within the education system and indicates the standard of achievement that learners must achieve.

It is anchored in the people of Tokelau's vision for a cohesive, caring nation with enhanced economic opportunity and community well-being, within a framework of sustainable economic development.

It is a statement of national policy and applies to all schools and students of Tokelau.

The individual school curriculum is the learning opportunities provided by each nuku's school in response to local needs and available resources. It must include the required parts of the national curriculum to the required levels, but may also include local responses to their needs.

The essential features of the Tokelau curriculum are:

- it is planned learning opportunities
- it is written statements of what are learning objectives and learning outcomes

- when implemented, it includes experiences
- at national level - it applies to all schools, all students
- at school level – it can include features specific to a school’s context

3.2 National Curriculum Policy Framework

The National Curriculum Policy Framework describes elements fundamental to teaching and learning in Tokelau schools and sets policies for these. It states the principles which give direction to all teaching and learning. It specifies key learning areas, essential skills, values and attitudes for all Tokelau students. It gives direction to the development of subject curriculum statements, outlines policies for assessment nationally and at school level. It outlines the policies for the implementation of the curriculum at school level. Specifically these include languages and bilingualism, length of the school year, subjects offered at each year level and time allocation, progression, approaches to teaching and learning, students with special needs, early childhood, assessment and reporting, homework, curriculum planning and review, monitoring teaching and learning, communication, student discipline, and pathways for students after Year 11.

3.3 Curriculum Policy Principles

The curriculum principles give direction to the development and implementation of the curriculum at both the national level and school level.

3.3.1 Self identity and learning success

The Tokelau Curriculum nurtures and strengthens the self-identity of each child. Self-identity embraces the spiritual, cultural, political and physical well-being of the individual. They include the values of respect, co-operation, discipline, adaptability, responsibility and quality decision making. Learners’ self-concept is enhanced when they experience success, and when they receive positive reinforcement and counsel. The Tokelau Curriculum recognises that all students can be successful learners. Successful learners participate effectively in classroom learning and are able to achieve the desired outcomes. They are self-directed and reflective, able to take responsibility for their own learning. They have a strong sense of their identity as Tokelauan, and are able to adapt to the demands of a developing nation interacting with the outside world. The Tokelau Curriculum provides learning experiences that affirm the learners' indigenous identity, and encourages all learners to achieve success. As a result each learner should be capable of contributing positively and confidently to the community in which he or she lives.

3.3.2 Tokelau culture and values

The Tokelau Curriculum upholds the traditions and values of Tokelau society. Tokelau culture is our way of life. It includes our shared understandings, ways of knowing and thinking about the world, our values, beliefs, and history. Our culture gives meaning to our social, political and economic relationships and structures. It shapes the way we think about us and the world around us. Tokelau language is the expression of our culture, as are our oral traditions, visual, performing arts, and crafts. Tokelau culture is the foundation of our identity as a people. It is dynamic and evolves through time as a result of exposure to other influences. The Tokelau Curriculum will ensure that the education the young people experience upholds the traditions of Tokelau culture and takes account of the ongoing changes it makes as it interacts with other influences.

3.3.3 Tokelau languages

The Tokelau Curriculum affirms bilingualism in Tokelauan and English as an important goal of education. To be bilingual is to be literate in both languages. This means they should be able to use either language effectively for a range of communication purposes in any school or community situation. In addition to the traditional literacy skills of reading and writing, literacy in either language includes the ability to be able to understand and respond to oral texts. Students are expected to be able to process a wide range of texts at different levels of comprehension from recall to evaluation. At senior levels of schooling they are expected to be able to integrate multiple sources of information to satisfy both academic and communicative purposes. Tokelauan language is important for identity and is the first language for almost all of the children. English is important for children to be confident and competitive in the outside world. The development of Tokelau as a modern nation requires a population that is highly skilled in both Tokelauan and English. The Tokelau Curriculum will ensure that all children are literate in Tokelauan and are able to use it for social, cultural and academic purposes. Tokelau literacy will encompass understanding, appreciation, analysis and review of Tokelau oral stories, and the range of genres and text types in oral traditions, from myths and legends, instructions, recounts, narratives, oral history, speeches, arguments, songs, the interpretation of our symbols and visual language. As well, the Tokelau Curriculum will develop students' levels of literacy in English necessary for learning, communication, and participation in modernisation.

3.3.4 Nation building

The Tokelau Curriculum facilitates the development of a cohesive nation, characterised by a stable indigenous culture, Christian principles, good governance and a strong work ethics. The curriculum promotes sustainable development for Tokelau through an educated, skilled and caring population.

Sustainable development enhances community well-being and economic opportunity while protecting and restoring the natural environment of Tokelau. It contributes to village development and the economic well-being of families and the nation. The curriculum emphasises the need to develop environmentally, economically and socially sustainable practices that value and sustain biodiversity and life-supporting ecological processes. Opportunities will be provided to ensure students have the knowledge and skills to contribute to sustainable nation building so that Tokelau adapts well to global influences.

The curriculum will also enable Tokelau to maintain links with regional and international partners.

Nation building is reflected in our traditional notion of inati, based on the principle of sharing traditional wealth, sharing of village assets and produce. The curriculum will provide opportunities to affirm Tokelau values, to have shared planning, participation and evaluation.

3.3.5 Assessment

The Tokelau Curriculum recognizes that quality assessment practice is an important part of the teaching and learning process.

Assessment is the gathering and interpreting information to find out where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. As such, it is a means of improving a student's performance and evaluating the quality of the teaching programme.

Assessment, where feedback is interactive and timely, has the greatest impact on a student's learning. Assessment is most effective when it focuses on how students learn and helps learners know how to improve. Students need opportunity to clearly understand their learning outcomes, the criteria that will be applied to assess their work, and the learning tasks. Good assessment practice involves students and teachers in planning, and develops students' ability to self-assess.

Formal assessment at regular interval will provide information that will be used to report to parents on the progress of the child. Formal assessment methods will include testing, internal assessments and formal examinations. The Tokelau Curriculum encourages the use of a range of assessment practices, procedures and reporting methods designed to provide evidence that learners have achieved certain competencies; and focuses the learner and teacher on the learning process.

3.3.6 Health and well-being

The Tokelau Curriculum recognizes that the strength of our nation in the future is in the health and well-being of the children of Tokelau. The curriculum aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and attitudes required to promote, maintain and continuously improve the personal health and well-being of the child. Health and well-being involves personal hygiene, mental health, a healthy lifestyle through proper diet and physical education, child growth and development, child safety in the environment (school, family, community), interpersonal relationships within the school, family, community and society, respect for human rights, spiritual education, and the expression of academic capacities. The Tokelau Curriculum promotes the implementation of proper health programmes, prevention measures, and awareness in suitable areas of the curriculum. It aims to ensure the health and well-being of the children contribute to healthy families, healthy islands and ultimately a healthy nation.

3.3.7 Tokelau learning success and approaches to teaching and learning

The Tokelau Curriculum promotes deep and meaningful learning. Learning is the process which involves creation of new understandings. The curriculum will provide opportunities for the students to be creative, intellectually challenged and to think about what they are learning. They will have opportunities to reflect and to make informed decisions. Teaching and learning programmes will ensure students are actively involved in learning and develop the ability to analyse knowledge critically in an environment which encourages inquiry, debate and independent thought. Learning experiences will provide rich opportunities that are relevant and challenging in order for the student to be productive locally and internationally. These opportunities include traditional approaches where learning knowledge and skills is reinforced through active listening, co-construction of meaning through discussions, demonstrations and on-going observations. Students will be knowledgeable in Tokelau culture as well as outside values and attitudes. Success in the outside world should affirm and not isolate students from where they belong.

3.3.8 Key competencies, values and attitudes

The Tokelau Curriculum requires that all students will develop the key competencies, values and attitudes that are the foundation of one's self development, and being a responsible member of Tokelau society. Life on Tokelau requires that students master practical life skills that will enable them to cope successfully with traditional tasks and everyday living. As well, they need the skills to use modern technology and be able to adapt to life outside Tokelau. The curriculum promotes an approach where students are not only proficient in key competencies but are grounded in the basic values and attitudes of—fakaaloalo, ava, va fealoaki (respect), ola pulea (disciplined), galulue

fakataki ma felagolagomaki (co-operation), aloha ma healofani (compassion), and fakamaoni (honesty)

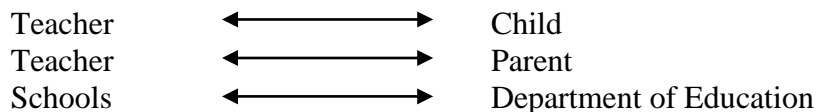
3.3.9 Teaching and learning programmes

The Tokelau Curriculum requires that principals and teachers implement teaching and learning programmes that have these features:

- a. Purposeful. They are well prepared and planned
- b. Relevant to students' needs and national requirements
- c. Motivate students
- d. Provide opportunities for students to be creative, self-directive, respectful, reflective and to think critically
- e. Reflect Tokelau values and ways of doing things
- f. Include active and interactive teaching methods and makes use of indigenous ways of learning
- g. Regularly reviewed in line with students' needs and national targets
- h. Make use of a range of different resources and experiences
- i. Include a range of assessment opportunities
- j. Use information that is up-to-date

The Tokelau Curriculum ensures that the learning programme uses teaching styles that suit student needs and level of individual development. Teaching style refers to the way lessons are being delivered and managed. Student needs includes emotional, physical, spiritual, social and health, educational resources and social environment.

The Tokelau Curriculum requires that the learning programmes include reporting. Reporting refers to communication of information about the child's educational progress, with the view of adjusting teaching methods. To cater for the learners' educational needs, reporting needs to take place between the child and the teacher at these levels.



Reporting will involve learners' and parents' input and participation in the interpretation and use of information for improved student performance and teaching practices. Student achievement and school performance is reported to the nation through the Department of Educations' legislated accountability functions.

3.3.10 Equity

The Tokelau Curriculum recognizes that the concept of equity requires that the system will treat all individuals fairly and justly in the provision of educational opportunity. Policies and practice which advantage some and disadvantage others will be avoided. The curriculum promotes equality of opportunity in access, treatment and outcome for all groups, and all students from early childhood education to tertiary and further education. This means that all students will receive a quality education regardless of gender differences, abilities and nuku. The Tokelau Curriculum acknowledges the need to meet the needs of the villages and the nation. Opportunities will therefore include those that build local capacity and productivity as well as opportunities for further studies overseas.

3.3.11 Sustainability

Tokelau's tiny size and isolation, distance separating the atolls, limited natural resources and vulnerability to natural disasters such as cyclones and rising sea levels shapes the way people live and meet their needs. People in turn shape the natural environment in which they live.

The features of Tokelau's natural environment make it essential that the national curriculum address issues of sustainability at each nuku. Sustainability relates to ways of thinking about the world, and forms of social and personal practice that lead to environmental practices that value and sustain biodiversity and life supporting ecological processes. Building Tokelau students' individual subject capability is critical to help them develop the skills and understanding necessary to meet the challenges of atoll environment and to make responsible and informed choices that sustain Tokelau environment.