

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR TONGA

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1. INTRODUCTION

The archipelago of "The Friendly Islands" was united into a Polynesian kingdom in 1845. It became a constitutional monarchy in 1875 and a British protectorate in 1900. Tonga acquired its independence in 1970 and became a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. It remains the only monarchy in the Pacific.

1. History And Background Of Tonga



Tonga, before Europeans arrived, was one of the most powerful islands in the region and at times its empire stretched across Samoa, Futuna, Uvea (Wallis), Rotuma, Niue and parts of Fiji. Testimony to these powerful times are evident along the north-eastern coast of Tongatapu where the powerful kings (Tui) resided. This archaeologically rich area offers the largest terraced tombs (*langi*) in the South Pacific at the present day village of Lapaha (formerly known as Mua) and the hugely impressive tradition of Ha'amonga 'A Maui, about five miles further along the north point. This tradition is a massive 12-ton stone archway made from three single limestone slabs. How they got there and what it was used for is uncertain but two of the more creditable theories are a gateway to the Royal Gardens or a shrine for observing the seasons. Other similar but smaller structures can be found within the Kingdom's ancient empire.

Captain Cook landed very close to the ancient capital of Mua in 1777 and visited the then King of Tonga. A plaque marks the place of his first footsteps, the first of any European.



Tonga is one of the few islands in the South Pacific that never resigned its independence and remains the only monarchy in the region.

Captain Cook's Landing

1.i. Culture

Tonga is located in the beautiful waters of the South Pacific. It is set between New Zealand and Australia.

Like all other cultures, the cultural identity of the Tongan is constructed and reconstructed. Tradition and culture is invented and reinvented in response to the different yet continuous encounters with other cultures. Migrants do not build their own ethnic identity from scratch; they bring in their own version of it.



Uniform for dancing

It then evolves to fit their new home. As is such the case in the Tongan culture. Many migrants, coming in and leaving, bring or leave their ideas of culture. So there is not really a set culture in Tonga, but a variety. There is still the influence of the old ways or Anga Fakatonga.

Anga Fakatonga is a fluid, manipulable, yet powerful concept. It is translated to mean culture or tradition. It is said to hold all that is Tongan in values and behavior. The main points of Anga Fakatonga that have stayed strong throughout the generations are song, dance, gender roles and the most central point is respect.



TAPA (NGATU)

Although Anga Fakatonga is still present, the daily life of the Tongans revolves primarily around church. There are both morning and afternoon services on Sundays, both lasting up to two hours. There is a break between the services. Food and beverages are supplied and the people have a time to socialize. There is also a service on Wednesday along with bible study and choir practice. On Fridays, there is a youth group for the adolescents. The church is not simply a place for worship but a place for social interactions. Migrant and natives come together to discuss the Tongan Way.

Even though the majority of the Tongans daily lives are consumed with church they still have time for arts and crafts. Mat making, woodcarving, basket making, jewelry, tapa products are all different examples of the Tongan artistry. Other important roles of Tongan daily are feasting, which can consist of up to thirty different dishes: steamed pork, suckling pig, fish, crayfish, beef, octopus, and a variety of tropical fruits. All of this is spread out on a long tray called a pola. A feast would not be complete in the Tongan culture if singing and dancing did not follow it. The lakalaka is the traditional Tongan dance, telling a new story each time.

Kava is called the official drink of the Pacific. It is the key cultural phenomenon. Kava is made from the ground roots of a native pepper plant. It is a part of the formal ceremonies. Kava has been around for over two thousand years. Tongans have formed the Kava Circle. It is the setting for conflict resolutions. Instead of drinking alcohol, which is violence-prone, Tongans enjoy Kava. Kava is not just a drink to the Tongans, but the essential ingredient of social life and culture.



Kava Plant

1.ii. Tonga's Economic

Every so often some of Tonga's volcanoes blow their tops. Eruptions centuries ago encrusted most of Tonga's islands with two layers of volcanic ash that became fertile soil. Even the low-lying atolls of Ha'apai enjoy a fertility that is not a feature of similar islands in the Pacific. The seasonally cooler climate of Tongatapu, one of the

most southerly of the tropical Pacific Islands, permit the production of fine potatoes and tomatoes, and an array of other temperate crops.

From their eight-and-a-quarter acre allotments, Tongan smallholders normally keep the country well supplied with the healthy basics of Polynesian diet; taro, yams, sweet potatoes, bananas and coconuts. These supplies are occasionally disrupted by crop damage inflicted by hurricanes, as in Vava'u in January, and occasional drought. The dominant export crop for the past ten or so years has been squash, small pumpkins exported to Japan and grown by scores of smallholders. The squash business has been a Godsend. Figures show why. In some years squash bring in more than half of all Tonga's export earnings and never less than one-third of them. The 1993/94 figure was T\$13 million from squash and total exports T\$23.2 million. Director of Agriculture claims credit for establishing Tonga's vanilla industry. This flourished for some years with an annual output of more than 40 tones, a fair chunk of world production. It faded when global competition brought prices down. In recent years, vanilla's export value has been under T\$1 million, in some years very much under. Now prices are soaring.

1.iii. Education in Tonga

Types of higher education institutions:

University

Teachers' Training College

College

School

School leaving and higher education credentials:

Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate

Tonga School Certificate

Tonga National Form 7 Certificate

Teaching Diploma

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Doctorate

Pre-higher education:

Duration of compulsory education:

Age of entry: 6

Age of exit: 14

Structure of school system:*Primary*

Type of school providing this education: Primary School

Length of program in years: 6

Age level from: 6 to: 12

Certificate/diploma awarded: Secondary Entrance Examination

Secondary

Type of school providing this education: Secondary School

Length of program in years: 5

Age level from: 12 to: 17

Certificate/diploma awarded: Tonga School Certificate

Upper Secondary

Type of school providing this education: Upper Secondary School

Length of program in years: 1

Age level from: 17 to: 18

Certificate/diploma awarded: Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate

Higher Secondary

Type of school providing this education: Form 7

Length of program in years: 1

Age level from: 18 to: 19

Certificate/diploma awarded: Form 7 Certificate

School education:

Primary education lasts for six years leading to the Secondary Entrance Examination. Since 1987, secondary education covers a possible seven years for most students and six for the most gifted. On completion of six years' (or five for some) study, students sit for Tonga School Certificate. Some schools go on to prepare pupils for the Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate in the seventh year (six for some), which is administered by the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA).

Higher education:

Tonga has not established a national university, although there is one private one, 'Atenisi', which is not recognized by the government, and runs degree courses. The University of the South Pacific (USP) operates a centre in Tonga, which enrolls extension students for most non-degree and degree courses offered by the University.

Academic year:

Classes from: Jan to: Dec

Languages of instruction: English, Tonga

Stages of studies:

Non-university level post-secondary studies (technical/vocational type):

Non-university level:

The Community Development and Training Centre (CDTC) coordinates all education and training at post-secondary level. It incorporates under its umbrella the Institute of Science and Technology and the Tonga Maritime Polytechnic Institute. The Ministry of Works' Trades Training Scheme offers a four-year Trades Certificate for which the minimum entry requirement is the Tonga School Certificate. CDTC is also loosely affiliated with several schools and colleges.

University level studies:

University level first stage: Bachelor's Degree:

The normal length of Bachelor Degree courses is three years, except for Medicine, which takes four years for a first degree.

University level second stage: Master's Degree:

Master's Degrees normally take one to two years after a first degree.

University level third stage: Doctorate:

Doctorates normally require a minimum of a further two years' study after the Master's degree.

Teacher education:

Training of pre-primary and primary/basic school teachers

The Tonga Teachers' Training College offers a three-year integrated Teaching

Diploma for primary-school teachers. The minimum entry requirement is the Pacific Senior School Certificate or equivalent.

Training of secondary school teachers

The Tonga Teachers' Training College offers a three-year integrated Teaching Diploma for secondary-school teachers. The minimum entry requirement is the Pacific Senior School Certificate or equivalent.

Non-traditional studies:

Distance higher education

The Distance Education and Research Centre, established in 1991, administers programmes in Adult Education, Satellite Communication, Computer and Diploma courses.

Admissions To Higher Education:

Admission to non university higher education studies

Name of secondary school credential required: Tonga School Certificate

Admission to university-level studies

Name of secondary school credential required: Tonga National Form 7 Certificate

Name of secondary school credential required:

Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate

Other admission requirements: Completion of the University's one-year foundation programme is equivalent to the Tonga National Form 7 for access to University studies.



1.iv. Health in Tonga



Tongan food is delightful, and consists mostly of root vegetables such as taro and sweet potato, coconut products, fresh fruit, roasted, suckling pig, chicken, corned beef,

fish and shellfish. The delicious dishes made from these ingredients are an excuse in themselves to visit the islands. The traditional Tongan feast gets cooked in an underground oven, *umu*, common throughout Polynesia. The most refreshing drink available is coconut juice, and the locally grown Royal Coffee is excellent if you're after a caffeine hit. Beer is popular, and of course kava (*Piper methysticum*), the all purpose forget-your-cares-and-stare-at-the-sunset tippie, is widely available.



1.vi. Policy

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion. Registration of religious groups is recommended by the Government for tax purposes but is not required. All religious groups are permitted duty-free entry of goods intended for religious purposes, but no religious group is subsidized or granted tax-exempt status.



Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Constitution states that Sunday, the Sabbath day, is to be "kept holy" and that no business can be conducted "except according to law." Although an except is made for hotels and resorts that are part of the tourism industry, the Sabbath day business prohibition is enforced strictly for all businesses, regardless of the business owners' religion.

The Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) maintains policy guidelines regarding the broadcast of religious programming on Radio Tonga. The TBC guidelines state that in view of "the character of the listening public," those who

preach on Radio Tonga must confine their preaching "within the limits of the mainstream Christian tradition." Due to this policy, the TBC does not allow members of the Baha'i Faith to discuss the tenets of their religion, or the founder, Baha'u'llah, by name. Similarly, the TBC does not allow Mormons to discuss their founder, Joseph Smith, or the Book of Mormon by name. This policy applies to all churches. Mormons utilize Radio Tonga for the announcement of church activities and functions. Other faiths also utilize Radio Tonga. Members of the Baha'i Faith utilize a privately owned radio station for program activities and the announcement of functions. A government-owned newspaper occasionally carries news articles about Baha'i activities or events, as well as about those of other faiths.

2. INCLUSION

2.i. What is Inclusion

Inclusion is about the people learning and live together

Inclusion treasures diversity and builds community

To Creates and shares tools, ideas, resources, capacities so all can live full lives.

To citizens educator families individuals organizations all of us

2.ii. Ten reasons for Inclusion

Inclusive education is a human right its good education and it makes good social sense.

HUMAN RIGHTS

1. All children have the right to learn together
2. Children should not be devalued or discriminated against by being excluded or sent away because of their disability or learning difficulty.
3. Disabled adults, describing themselves as special school survivors are demanding an end to segregation.
4. There are no legitimate reasons to separate children for their education children belong together with advantage and benefits for everyone they do not need to be protected from each other.

GOOD EDUCATION

5. Research shows children do better academically and socially in integrated settings.
6. There is no teaching or case in a segregated school, which cannot take place in an ordinary school.
7. Given commitment and support inclusive education is a more efficient use of educational resources

GOD SOCIAL SENSE

8. Segregation teaches children to be fearful, ignorant and breeds prejudice.
9. All children need an education that will help them develop relationship and prepare them for life in the mainstream.
10. Only inclusion has the potential to reduce fear and to build friendships, respect and understanding.



2.iii. Language of disability:

It recognizes, values and respects “difference” in learning among all children. All children experience difficulty in learning at some time or the other and therefore their learning needs to be supported.

“Handicapped”, “Disable” or “People with disabilities”; which description is more accurate?

Using the handicapped or even the disabled, usually evokes negative stereotypical feelings (Sadness, pity, fear) and creates stereotypical perception that people with disabilities are all alike. All people who have brown hair are not alike. All people who have disabilities are not alike.

Many people who have disabilities would never think of themselves as “handicapped” The disability community is the largest minority group in our country. It includes people of both gender and from all religions, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic levels.

The only things people with disabilities have in common with one another are:

1. Having a body function that operates differently.
2. Facing prejudice and discrimination; and
3. Having a desire to be treated with the same dignity and respect afforded to people without disabilities.

Examples of people first Language

Labels no to use	People first language
The handicapped or disabled	People with disabilities
The mentally retarded	People with mental retardation
He's retarded	He has a cognitive disability
My son is autistic	My son has autism.
She is a downs kid a mongoloid	She has downs syndrome
He is learning disabled	He has learning disability
I am a paraplegic	I have paraplegia
She is crippled	She has a physical disabilities
He is a dwarf (or midge)	He is of short stature or he is short
She is emotionally disturbed	She has an emotional disability
He is wheelchair bound or confined to wheelchair	He uses a wheelchair
Normal and / or healthy kids	Typical kids or kids without disabilities
He is in special education	He receives special education services or additional support services
Handicapped parking	Accessible parking
She has a problem with	She has a need for

2.iv. Barriers To Inclusion

Policy Level

- ❖ Lack of policy for inclusion in the country
- ❖ No exposure to the society
- ❖ Lack of trained manpower (eg. Teachers, therapists, psychologists and social Workers etc)
- ❖ Become more independent
- ❖ Deficiency of pre-school education system
- ❖ Less interaction with surroundings
- ❖ Lack of system on parental training and community
- ❖ Shift in attitude and positive awareness

Attitude Level

- ❖ No awareness about disability (eg. how to help, how to teach daily activities)
- ❖ Disability perceived as an individual problem
- ❖ Negative attitude on disability
- ❖ People mention a name for disabled people

Practice Level

- ❖ Don't have Inclusive School
- ❖ Lack of research on educating children for equal opportunities
- ❖ Lack of aids and appliances
- ❖ Inflexible curriculum
- ❖ Training Teacher
- ❖ Insufficient physical therapy
- ❖ Lack of disable friendly infrastructure

2.v. Model of Inclusion:



3. RECOMMENDATIONS

We need to promote inclusive policies and legislations to support Inclusive Education, to be educated as other normal people.

3.i. Policy Level

- ❖ Improve cooperation of organizations involved with services to provide for persons with disabilities and cooperation within Ministry of Education.
- ❖ To support government programmes
- ❖ Orientation programmes for people in the village education committees.
- ❖ The government should take the initiative to increase community participation in Inclusive education.
- ❖ The government should have more teachers in inclusive class settings.
- ❖ To organize workshops on including children with disabilities into mainstream
- ❖ Schools.

3.ii. Attitude Level

- ❖ To develop Inclusive education, first people's attitude is basis of successful inclusive education (eg. radio, TV, media).
- ❖ To change attitudes, sensitization programmes are needed to create awareness.
- ❖ To appreciate the fact that the AMW spent so much time with the children.

3.iii. Practice Level

- ❖ Disability should become a regular part of curriculum at teacher training course.
- ❖ Inclusive education and special education components should be included at all Teacher education courses.

- ❖ Teachers should learn how they can make the curriculum flexible for people with disabilities.
- ❖ Increase number of social workers and psychologists in schools.
- ❖ Improve knowledge of family doctors, train them on how to identify disability at early age.

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