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**The Impact of a Professional Development Programme on the
Effectiveness of School Leaders in Solomon Islands**

A thesis

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of the requirements for the degree

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ABSTRACT

Professional development is a process by which a person acquires and maintains personal and professional abilities and skills, which leads to increased competence in their field. Professional development for school leaders is therefore crucial to providing opportunities for them to reflect on their practice, debate issues about their work, and develop strategies to improve their teaching and leadership practice.

This study is concerned with the professional development of school leaders in Makira Ulawa Province (MUP) in Solomon Islands. In particular, it investigates the impact of a New Zealand Aid funded Professional Development Programme (PDP) on developing head teachers' understandings of their roles and responsibilities, and on increasing their effectiveness. While much research on professional development (PD) of head teachers has been conducted, especially in developed countries, very little research has been carried out in Melanesian countries such as Solomon Islands. Thus very little is known about the professional development of head teachers in Solomon Islands.

For this study data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted with five rural primary school head teachers who had participated in the PDP and the two facilitators who were involved in leading it. A thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data and six themes were identified: learning experiences of the head teachers during the PDP; positive impacts of the PDP; cooperation; the head teachers' views on PD and learning; the facilitators' views on the PDP; and the challenges experienced by the facilitators and head teachers.

The findings show that head teachers' PD of the kind provided by the PDP needs to be on-going and a career-long developmental process so that head teachers can sustain, enhance, and put into action the knowledge and skills they gain. School based PD of head teachers through programmes such as the PDP has potential and

is appropriate for developing countries such as Solomon Islands. For such programmes to be consistently successful however, they need to be tailored to the local education context and needs of the head teachers, and conducted for an appropriate length of time.

This study highlights the need to provide effective PD programmes for school leaders and has identified important implications for the development and effectiveness of head teachers in Solomon Islands. It has been concluded that Solomon Islands should aim to develop a national on-going PD programme for school leaders with an emphasis on a school-based approach which involves local support personnel.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 An overview

In Solomon Islands the majority of primary school teachers are trained at the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE), School of Education. Others attend training at the University of the South Pacific (USP) or tertiary institutions overseas. After graduation, teacher trainees are posted by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) through the provincial Education Authorities (EAs) to the primary schools in both urban centres and in rural areas in the country (MEHRD, 2007a). The teacher trainees enter the teaching profession as primary probationers. The Solomon Islands Ministry of Education (2007b) refers to primary teacher graduates in their first appointment as primary probationers. They serve a one year probationary period and on completion of that they will be assessed for confirmation and formally registered as a teacher in Solomon Islands. The MEHRD and EAs have the authority to assess primary probationers and this is undertaken by school inspectors. If the assessment results reveal that the probationer is professionally fit and capable of executing his or her duties, the inspector will recommend confirmation and registration of the probationer to the Teaching Service Commission (TSC). In a case where a probationer's assessment report is unsatisfactory, he or she will be given one more year of probation and any decisions made about their suitability for teaching are then final.

After confirmation and registration, and after serving for some years, teachers are eligible for promotion. EAs are responsible for the recruitment and recommendation of teachers to the TSC for promotion to senior positions in their schools such as that of head teacher. The TSC has the authority to either accept or refuse the EAs' recommendations.

1.2 The context of the study

1.2.1 Geographical features

The Solomon Islands is situated between 8° south latitude and 170.5° east longitude. It is made up of a double chain of islands which stretches 1,450 kilometres from Vanuatu in the east and Papua New Guinea in the north, and has a total land area of 28,369 square kilometres. The country is made up of six main islands and hundreds of smaller ones. The six main islands are Makira, Malaita, Guadalcanal, Santa Isabel, New Georgia and Choiseul. Honiara, the capital city, is situated on Guadalcanal. The main islands have rain forests, volcanic mountains, and deep narrow valleys, and the coastlines are cultivated with coconut plantations and have coral reefs and lagoons. The smaller islands are mostly raised coral reefs, atolls and lagoons. These features impact significantly on logistics, communication and the effective provision of vital services such as health and education to the rural population (Akao, 2008; Malasa, 2007; Pollard, 2000).

1.2.2 Socio –cultural context

The Solomon Islands population consists of people of different races, cultures, languages and customs. The three main races in the country are Melanesian, Polynesian and Micronesian. In 2009 the population was estimated at 518,338 of which 94.5 % are Melanesian, 3% Polynesian, 1.2% Micronesian and 0.2 % other races (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009; United States Department of State, 2009). There are about eighty different languages spoken in the country. English is the official language used in government offices, educational institutions and businesses, while pidgin is used by people of different islands and ethnicities to communicate with each other. About 10% of the population live in urban centres and includes people who have formal employment either from the government, the private sector or non-government organisations. The majority of the people live in rural areas and do not have employment but are dependent on subsistence farming and fishing for their living. These rural people sell the surplus from their farms to earn money and meet some of their basic needs, including school fees for their children.

Christianity is the dominant religion in Solomon Islands and people are affiliated to one of the predominant denominations: the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACOM) 32%, Roman Catholic (RC) 19%, South Seas Evangelical Church (SSEC) 17%, United Church (UC) 10.3%, Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) 11.2%, Christian Fellowship Church (CFC) 2.4% and other smaller churches 4.4% (Sisiolo, 2010). The nine provinces of the Solomon Islands include Temotu, Makira Ulawa, Rennel Bellona, Guadalcanal, Malaita, Central, Isabel, Western and Choiseul. Each province administers and manages its own provincial services in conjunction with the national government in areas such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, health and education through the provincial government systems. In terms of education, each province has its own education authority which is an office responsible for all government schools that are situated in the province.

1.3 The education system in the Solomon Islands

The education system in Solomon Islands is administered under the Education Act of 1978 (Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 1978). This act spells out the roles and responsibilities of the Minister of Education, Education Authorities, school committees or boards and school principals and head teachers. While the act is in serious need of review to accommodate changes in the country's education system, it currently provides the legal basis for the decentralisation of the educational administration to the nine provincial education boards and Honiara City Council (Malasa, 2007). The decentralisation of the education system is necessary because of the geographical isolation of the provinces and the diversity of the country, coupled with problems relating to communication and transportation (Sikua, 2002). The decentralisation of the education system ensures that administrative issues relating to teachers and schools are dealt with at the school and provincial level. The Teaching Service Office (TSO) sets teachers' establishment and vacancies for all the government schools in the country.

In conjunction with Education Authorities (EAs) it also administers teachers' appointments, promotion, demotion and salary payments (Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 2007b). Currently, as a result of the decentralisation of the

education system EAs are fully responsible for teachers' appointments, promotion and demotion (Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 2007b).

The current education system is responsible for ensuring that schools and educational institutions across the country continue to operate and develop (Malasa, 2007). It manages and administers more than 300 Early childhood Education (ECE) centres, 600 Primary School (PS) and 140 Secondary Schools (SS) and employs more than 4, 000 teachers, head teachers and principals (Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 2007b; Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2004).

1.3.1 Early childhood education (ECE)

Early Childhood Education is a comparatively new concept in Solomon Islands education. It was first introduced to the country in the 1980s by private individuals, groups and organisations mostly in urban areas (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2007a). Since then the number of ECE centres has continued to increase. This led the Solomon Islands government to formally recognize ECE in 1998 by supporting the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education to offer training for ECE teachers and paying ECE teachers' salaries. In the mid 1990s the New Zealand government provided substantial assistance for ECE in Solomon Islands. (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2007a). Currently, not all young children have access to ECE centres. This is due to the lack of such centres in most rural communities and the locations of the some ECE centres which are far away from some communities thus making it difficult for young children to travel long distances.

1.3.2 Primary education

Primary education covers the period from preparatory class to year 6 (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2007a). This means primary education is seven years in length. There is no strict requirement for children to enter primary school at a particular age as in many communities they need to be old enough to walk long distances to school.

In most primary schools however, children's ages range from 6 to 12 years. Children usually move on to the next year level based on their satisfactory performance in their current year level. This has led some children to remain in a particular year level for more than a year. There is a lack of specialist teachers to support students with special learning needs in primary schools in Solomon Islands. Year 6 is the level where children are selected for year seven to begin their secondary education. Children's selection to year 7 is based on their results in year 6 national exams which are normally held in October. Because there are not enough places in year 7 most year 6 children are forced to leave the formal education through the national examination and selection process. Those children who are not able to secure a place in year 7 are referred to as 'school dropouts'.

There is a total of 650 primary schools in Solomon Islands. Out of these 650, 117 primary schools have Community High Schools (CHS) attached to them (Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 2007b). According to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (2007a), the main goal of primary education is to develop in young children basic skills to equip them to become an asset in their communities and Solomon Islands society at large. Some of these skills include reading and writing, listening and speaking, basic skills in numeracy and other basic knowledge and skills in areas such as health, community studies, physical education and agriculture (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2008).

Teachers usually acquire leadership positions in primary schools based on the number of years served, being an indigenous citizen of the local school community, and through political influence (Sisiolo, 2010). Many teachers appointed to a head teacher's position in a primary school however, are not prepared for school leadership (Malasa, 2007). The Solomon Islands' government, through the MEHRD has prioritised preparation of school leaders in the Ministry of Education National development Plan 2007-2009. This states that "principals' (Head teachers') training will be re-introduced and all principals and head teachers will undertake management training, including staff management and resource management" (Solomon Islands, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2007b, p. 49).

1.3.3 Secondary education

Secondary education in Solomon Islands can be grouped into three categories. The first comprises the National Secondary Schools (NSS). These schools are mostly administered by the central government through the MEHRD and the churches. These schools offer years 7 to 13 secondary education and enrol students from all over the country. There are nine national secondary schools in the country (Aruhu, 2010). The second type is provincial secondary schools (PSS). These schools are located within the country's 9 provinces and are administered by the education authority of each province. There are currently 16 PSSs in the country. These schools normally enrol students from the host province and take students from years 7 to 12. The third type of secondary school is the Community High Schools (CHS). These are mostly community based schools and are administered by provincial education authorities, churches and Honiara City Council. Most CHSs coexist with primary schools and enrol students from year 7 to year 9. Some CHSs however, enrol students up to years 11 and 12. Most of these CHSs were initiated and built by the local communities which provide free land, timber and labour for the establishing of these schools. The schools are governed by school boards with the principal and the deputy being responsible for their daily management and operation. Both the principal and the school board are answerable to the community and to the Ministry of Education through the respective educational authorities (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2007a).

1.4 Makira Ulawa Province

Makira Ulawa Province is the location which has provided the context for this research conducted in 2012. Makira Ulawa is located at the eastern end of the Solomon Islands. It has a total land mass of 3,188 square kilometres and a population of 40,419 at the last census (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009). The province's indigenous people are mostly Melanesian and a small group of Polynesian settlers. It is governed by the Makira Ulawa Provincial Government which is headed by the premier. The provincial government, in association with the national government, is responsible for all service delivery to

the people of the province, including education services. The office of the provincial government that is responsible for all government schools in the province is known as the Makira Ulawa Education Authority (MUEA). This office is headed by the Chief Education Officer and mainly deals with teacher appointments, postings, salaries, promotions, discipline and welfare. The province has 60 ECE centres, 73 primary schools, 16 Community High Schools and one Provincial Secondary School and employs a total of 486 teachers, ECE supervisors, head teachers and principals.

1.5 Statement of the issue

In Solomon Islands there is no formal requirement for teachers to obtain qualifications in educational leadership or administration before becoming a head teacher. There are also no preparation programmes or formalised professional support in place for school leaders (Malasa, 2007; Sisiolo, 2010). Head teachers are usually selected from the classroom on the basis of their experience and good teaching records. This practice is based on the unwritten assumption that good teaching records and experience are enough to enable teachers to become good school leaders without further preparation (Bush & Oduro, 2006). Most head teachers in Solomon Islands are qualified primary school teachers with teaching certificates. However, their teaching qualifications do not necessarily equip them with the knowledge and skills to confidently and effectively implement their leadership roles. Despite this as mentioned above, there is a lack of preparation and professional support provided by MEHRD and EAs for the head teachers. Most perform their roles and responsibilities by using their own experience, observing other head teachers and through ‘trial and error’.

Nevertheless, the MEHRD and EAs recognise the need to support and provide PD for teachers (MEHRD, 2007a). Accordingly they have included in the Ministry of Education Strategic Framework (2007-2015) a major component which takes into account teacher training and development. This strategic framework is important as it establishes the basis upon which MEHRD and EAs can seek funds from aid donors and the government to support PD programmes for teachers and head teachers. The New Zealand Aid PDP is one example of an initiative undertaken by

Makira Ulawa Education Authority (MUEA) in recognition of the importance and need to provide PD for head teachers in the province.

In light of the above it was timely to carry out an investigation of the ways existing programmes contribute to the development of head teachers' as educational leaders in Solomon Islands. The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of a New Zealand Aid funded PDP on developing the understandings primary school head teachers in MUP have of their responsibilities and roles, and on increasing their effectiveness as school leaders. More specifically, the study was underpinned by the following research questions:

1. What were the professional learning experiences of the head teachers participating in the professional development programme?
2. In what ways has the professional development programme influenced the head teachers' effectiveness as school leaders?
3. What views do the head teachers hold about the purpose and implications of professional development? Have these changed as a result of their training?
4. In what ways do the facilitators consider that the head teachers have become more effective school leaders?

1.6 Interest in the professional development of head teachers

From 2008 to 2010 I served as an Education Officer in the Makira Ulawa Education Authority (MUEA). One of my responsibilities was to provide advice and guidance for primary school head teachers on their role and responsibilities as professional leaders of their schools. My interest in PD and learning for school leaders developed further when I was first involved with two New Zealanders (from Volunteer Service Abroad) in facilitating a school leaders' PD programme for primary head teachers in Makira Ulawa Province in 2009.

An issue of concern I then identified when working with head teachers over the past three years, was that they were not able to carry out their responsibilities and roles satisfactorily for a number of reasons. For example, the majority of these head teachers did not have any formal qualifications in educational leadership and there was a lack of induction or preparation programmes for them in the province. While the majority of the head teachers had teaching qualifications, these had not equipped them with the necessary knowledge and skills to confidently and effectively carry out their leadership responsibilities and roles.

The head teachers' PD programme facilitated in 2009 was the first of its kind in the province and was attended by a group of about fifty head teachers. The feedback about this PD programme from the head teachers involved was positive and as a result New Zealand Aid (through the New Zealand High Commission Office in Solomon Islands) decided to fund a similar programme for another group of head teachers in 2011 led by facilitators from New Zealand and Solomon Islands. While I was involved in the initial preparation stage of this PD programme I was not able to continue as I had to leave for my studies in New Zealand.

I believe that undertaking a study of the New Zealand Aid funded PDP in Makira Ulawa Province with head teachers is timely. It has the potential to reveal the benefits of PD programmes like this, especially the ways that such a programme can enhance the leadership capacity of head teachers in the province and in Solomon Islands as a whole.

1.7 Significance of the study

Professional development and learning are important for providing teachers and school leaders with opportunities to reflect on their practice, debate issues about their work and develop strategies to improve their teaching and leadership practice. It is important therefore, that teachers and educational leaders have access to programmes that promote their PD and growth (Little, 1993; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007).

In MUP, there are limited opportunities for teachers and school leaders to participate in PD programmes. To date there has been little research undertaken about PD and learning programmes for head teachers in the province and Solomon Islands in general. The findings of this study should therefore be of interest and importance for the MEHRD, MUP, and New Zealand Aid as stakeholders whose aim it is to improve the leadership capacity of school leaders in MUP and Solomon Islands. The information gathered from this study should also be useful for Makira Ulawa Provincial Government and MUEA in Solomon Islands. It could help the provincial educational planners and leaders put in place appropriate and effective PD support programmes for head teachers that will enable them to be more effective school leaders.

Furthermore, the findings could be useful for the MEHRD and New Zealand Aid. For example, the MEHRD could use information from this study to develop and formulate policies and guidelines for school leadership preparation programmes and in-service professional development programmes for school leaders in Solomon Islands. New Zealand Aid could use the information to evaluate the effectiveness of how its funds have been used to improve education, especially in rural schools where the majority of schools in Solomon Islands are situated and most people live. Finally, the information from this study could be useful for other provincial governments and private education authorities in developing countries in their consideration of PD programmes for their school leaders.

An overview of the thesis

There are six chapters in this thesis. In this first chapter I have provided a brief overview of the context of the study and the Solomon Islands' education system. I have also stated the issue and discussed the significance of this study. Chapter two critiques the current literature about educational leadership and principals' effectiveness in both developed and developing countries. It also reviews and examines some of the literature to do with PD of school leaders and PD strategies. The third chapter outlines the research design for this study and includes discussion about research methodology, method, and ethical consideration. Chapter four presents the research findings where the themes are identified

through participants' 'voices'. In chapter five the findings are discussed with reference to relevant literature. Lastly, the conclusion draws together and summarizes the research. It highlights the significant findings and limitations of this study and makes recommendations for change.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Professional development is important for providing school leaders with opportunities to reflect on their practice, debate issues about their work, and develop strategies to improve their leadership practice. It is therefore critical that school leaders have access to programmes that promote PD and growth (Little, 1993; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007).

In Solomon Islands, teachers in primary schools are appointed to the post of head teacher on the basis of the number of years they have been teaching and their good teaching record. After being appointed to their post they are normally sent to a designated school and are expected to perform the roles and responsibilities of the head teacher. This system also means that many head teachers can be in their posts for years without access to any PD opportunities, even though they encounter numerous problems and challenges in their work.

There is very little literature on the topic of PD of primary school head teachers in the Solomon Islands context hence most of the literature reviewed here has originated from studies in other countries. Given the limited nature of research in this area in Solomon Islands context, it is intended that a review of some of literature to do with the professional development of school leaders will provide insights into the kinds of PD programmes which could be appropriate in the future for Solomon Islands head teachers.

The literature about PD for school leaders is substantial and continues to grow as new thinking and strategies for leadership development emerge. In this literature review attention is drawn to the literature pertaining to the PD of school leaders and in particular it examines the following: educational leadership; professional development; PD of school leaders; leadership development in developing countries, PD strategies; and Solomon Islands context.

2.2 Educational Leadership

There are numerous definitions provided for the concept of leadership and Sharma (2005) has argued that leadership means different things to different people. These different definitions do however share some similarities. Munroe's (2005) description of leadership is centred around the trust a leader earns from followers, while Kouzes and Posner (1997) have focused on "the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for a shared aspiration" (p. 30). Similarly, Newman (1993) has described leadership as the "special and unique ability to influence people to move towards goals that are beneficial and meet the group's best interests" (p.15) while according to Northhouse (2001), leadership is a process whereby "an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 3). The influence of leadership can be seen as a two way process. Authors like Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), McBeth (2008), and Sharma (2005) suggest that in an interactive process leaders are able to influence followers and followers influence leadership. The objective of such influence they say, ought to be a collaborative striving for common goals.

Many definitions and understandings of leadership have become context specific. In the school context for instance, educational leadership is leadership carried out by those in educational institutions and includes activities and actions that are intended to encourage a continuous improvement process (Robertson, 2005). Educational leadership then, is oriented towards principals, staff, students, parents and others as those who have influence and a stake in the school and its students. As the literature suggests, one of the primary functions of educational leadership is to guide teaching staff towards positive change (Northhouse, 2001; Sharma; 2005). Elmore (2004) endeavours to put this plainly in his description of educational leadership as being to do with the "guidance and direction of instructional improvement" (p. 13). Benneth and Anderson's (2003) summary of the concept and context of educational leadership however, seems to encapsulate current thinking most effectively:

It is a concept [that is] both multidimensional and multifaceted, where the values, goals, beliefs and decision making skills of the principal give purpose and meaning to the policies and procedures which are implemented, are not set by the principal or the school but rather are established and affected by national, provincial, divisional and local pressures groups. (p. 13)

Louis and Miles (as cited in Huber, 2004) distinguish between management and leadership in education. They refer to management as to do with administrative activities and organisational areas, and leadership as motivating and inspiring others to achieve common educational goals. For these two authors, educational leadership involves both administrative and management tasks (for example, managing and distributing resources or planning and coordinating school activities) as well as leadership tasks such as promoting a cooperative school culture, collegiality and shared vision, and stimulating creativity and initiatives from others. However, according to Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (2009), the notion of educational leadership as described by Louis and Miles (as cited in Huber, 2004) “is unsatisfactory because it ignores the possibility that some leadership activities in schools may not be directed towards educational ends” (p. 69).

As a study conducted by Hodgen and Wylie (2005) found, in New Zealand many principals consider that too much of their day-to-day work is not educationally relevant. Boris-Schacter and Langer (2006) highlight a similar sentiment in their study with principals in the United States. The principals in their study indicated that most of their time was devoted to paperwork associated with state and federal legislation, and community demands that principals regard as “tangential to the mission of teaching and learning” (p. 20). Sanga and Houma (2004) also found that in Solomon Islands principals spend much of their time performing management and administrative tasks.

It has been suggested by Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (2009) that a better approach to defining educational leadership would be to consider the purpose of education because this would bring those with a vested interest in providing effective education back to what it is that actually motivates leaders. While the purpose of education varies between different countries, communities and

contexts, a common purpose across the education systems in both developed and developing countries is for the development of social values and the improvement of educational outcomes for students (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009; Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2010). It is such a purpose that has led to the differentiation of educational leadership from the types of leadership experienced in non-educational institutions and organisations.

Amongst the various types of leadership practices cited in the literature, there are several leadership models that have been adopted in educational settings. The leadership activities of these models are specifically educational and include transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009; Leithwood, Tomlinson & Genge, 1996; Hallinger, 2005).

2.3 Effective School Leadership

Effective school leaders use a range of leadership styles according to the demands of the situation. Begley (2006) notes that in order to lead effectively in schools, school leaders need to understand human nature and the motivations of individuals in particular. According to Dimmock and Walker (2002) studies of school effectiveness claim there is no one specific model or style for effective school leadership that can be applied. Furthermore, they suggest there is no definitive group of qualities that characterise an effective leader. However, what is evident from studies such as Earley and Weindling's (2005) is that the way in which school leaders perform their leadership roles is critical because of the impact on the ways teachers, students, and other stakeholders are motivated to perform. This, and other research by Blumberg and Greenfield (1986), Blase and Blase (1998) and Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) (2005) has pointed to some key qualities and features that are common to effective school leaders.

2.3.1 Having a clearly articulated vision

Davis (2006) considers that one of the vital characteristics of effective school leaders is their ability to communicate to stakeholders a rational and appealing

vision for the future, and to be able to take a strategic leadership approach. According to Manasse (as cited in SEDL, 2005) vision is defined as “the force which moulds meaning for the people of an organisation” (p. 150). It is a force that can create meaning, understanding and reason for the work of an organisation, and goes well beyond maintaining the status quo (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986). Many authors have identified that having a clearly articulated vision or purpose is central to successful effective leadership (Bush & Glover, 2003; Creighton, 1999; Hoppe, 2003; Kotter, 1998; Miller, 2002). They contend that a school leader must have the capacity to create a compelling vision that can drive their school forward.

This aspect of leadership Manasse (1986) claims, is visionary leadership and can be grouped into organisational, future, personal, and strategic. Organisational vision involves having a comprehensive picture of the various systems that form and operate within an organisation, and an understanding of how the systems interrelate. Future vision consists of a clear picture of the status of the organisation at some point in the future, including how it will be situated within its environment and how it will operate internally. Personal vision includes the internal aspirations that the leader has for the organisation and acts as the impetus for the actions that will link organisational and future vision. Finally, strategic vision involves “connecting the reality of the present (organisational vision) to the possibilities of the future (future vision) in a unique way (personal vision) that is appropriate for the organisation and its leaders and staff” (Kedian, 2011, p. 10). A leader with a clear vision of what they want the school to become can empower an entire staff and school community to have a common sense of purpose.

Having a vision alone however, is not sufficient for a principal to become an effective school leader. The principal’s vision needs to be shared and agreed to by the members of the school, that is those who will be involved in the implementation of the vision, regardless of whether it is developed collaboratively or initiated by the leader (Leithwood, Janti, & Steinbach, 1999). Notably, Harris (2002) argues that the shared values and vision must be collaboratively constructed by leaders with others, and must be lived and consistent. According to this author, a commitment to a shared vision is crucial to the maintenance of an

organisation's distributed or shared leadership practice and is one of the qualities of effective leadership.

In Solomon Islands, it is desirable for school leaders to share their personal vision with teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders in order to convert that vision into reality. A principal's personal vision for their school is intended to be a unifying concept and Davies (2006) suggests that for it to also be an ethical or moral vision, it needs to be based on a clear set of values and beliefs. This should involve the various members of community and other stakeholders in the initial stage of formulating the vision in order to develop the "shared" aspect.

... the strategy process is not seen just as a functional means of moving the school from one stage in its development to the next.... [but] needs to be based on a series of values and beliefs that aim to improve the lives of children and those who work in the schools. (Davies, 2006, p.27)

2.3.2 Valuing and utilising the knowledge and skills of teachers and other members of the school

In schools, teachers and other stakeholders are valuable resources (Barker, 2001; Day, 2000; Kotter, 1998; Harris & Chapman, 2002). One of the main characteristics of an effective leader is that they value these human resources (Love, 2005; SEDL, 2005) thus recognising that nourishing individuals is central to effective leadership. A leader needs to identify the skills and abilities that individual members have and allow them to achieve greater levels of competence in these and to develop others (Love, 2005). This creates an environment that promotes and acknowledges the contributions of each individual to the school's work and to the fulfilment of the shared vision of the school (SEDL, 2005).

This leadership approach is reflective of the distributed leadership style referred to earlier (Harris, 2002; Earley & Weindling, 2004; Spillance, Diamond, Sherer, & Coldren, 2005). Here, leadership is seen as the responsibility of all members of the school. This does not mean that the role of the principal is diminished as they remain responsible for the overall leadership and performance of the school. This kind of leadership has proven to be effective as it has the capacity to hold "the pieces of the organisation together in a productive relationship and can create a

common culture of expectations around the use of individual skills and abilities” (Harris , 2002, p. 4).

2.3.3 Support and encourage teachers and students

A school leader who gathers support and commitment from his or her colleagues and other members of the community knows that much of what can be achieved depends on these aspects (Miller, 2002; Harris & Chapman, 2002). Eaker, Dufour, and Dufour (2002) refer to this type of leadership as transformational. Hence a school leader must possess the knowledge and skills and the commitment necessary to nurture, motivate and challenge his or her staff (Love, 2005). This means a school leader must be someone who communicates effectively and is able to maintain sound personal relationships with teachers, students, and the school community as a whole. An effective school leader must also have the capacity to develop a school environment in which members of the school are motivated to produce a shared vision and work as a team towards the achievement of their shared vision. By creating a school environment in which staff and students want to participate, a school leader is able to influence others. Leaders also need to understand what people value, hence they can have an impact on people’s actions by facilitating opportunities that will lead to desired outcomes.

The literature clearly shows that educational leadership is a challenging practice. A leader needs to resolve to be able to face and address challenges (Barker, 2001; Day, 2000; Harris & Chapman, 2002) and know how to empower people to take action, to solve problems, and to voice their ideas (Love, 2005).

2.4 Professional Development

The literature offers a variety of views on professional development (PD). Lois (2008) considers that in educational contexts, PD is to do with having an expert in a particular field of knowledge help others gain and improve their knowledge and skills. Brundrett (2010) refers to it as the improvement of a person’s competence or expertise in his or her profession. These authors claim that PD is a process of acquiring, maintaining, and advancing an individual’s personal and professional

abilities, including leadership. According to Robertson (2005) and Villegas-Reimers (2003) PD includes formal experiences such as attending or participating in PD programmes like in-service training, workshops, seminars, mentoring and coaching, as well as other informal experiences. Coleman (2011) has further noted that PD may also “include being given a particular responsibility or project to manage, induction into a new role and career mentoring and coaching to bring out the best in individuals” (p. 197).

The literature suggests that PD is an intentional and systematic process and can have many purposes linked to personal interests, group interests, school goals, and local or national initiatives. PD is also considered to be a lifelong and collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of individuals and teams; promotes and focuses on improvement in the work and practice of educators; and ultimately improves students’ achievement (Lindstrom & Speck, 2004; Morwick, 2011; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007).

Studies have yet to explore in any great depth PD programmes in the countries of the South Pacific, especially in Melanesian countries like Solomon Islands. Most of the research has been carried out in developed countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, European countries, Australia and New Zealand. Bush (2008) and Moorosi and Bush (2011) have noted however, that this research often lacks contextual specificity and relevance to developing countries and small island states because most of the findings are based on the models of western countries. As Watson (2001) has pointed out, “educational policies cannot easily be transplanted from one national and social context to another” (p. 29). Similarly, Moorosi and Bush (2011) have advocated that specific forms of leadership development should be avoided unless they are based firmly on local needs and cultural imperatives. Moreover Dimmock and Walker (2002) have argued that “although cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches is generally beneficial, there are dangers in failing to recognise that theory, practice, and imported expertise may not readily apply across national and cultural boundaries” (p. 167).

There are also questions about whether the state government in developing countries such as the Solomon Islands would have the capacity and resources to

be able to provide the kind of PD programmes for school leaders that have been identified as beneficial in the literature. For instance Bush (2008) noted that the economy, social, health and educational problems of developing countries has inhibited the provision of PD programmes and support for school leaders in these countries.

Despite the above arguments, there is an increasing internationalisation of education brought about by the notion that education models can be transferred to different countries regardless of their different contexts (Gunter, 2008). This has shaped the thinking of policy-makers in both developed and developing countries, including Solomon Islands. Hence in order to investigate the impact of a New Zealand Aid funded PD programme on the effectiveness of school leaders in Solomon Islands, it is important to critique the literature about PD programmes in developing and developed countries, and where possible relate them to the Solomon Islands context.

Just what effective PD is can be difficult to define. A general agreement held by many authors is that it should be transformative, and that its main function is to be concerned with school improvement resulting in the enhancement of school leaders and teachers' practice, and students' learning (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Brooke-Smith, 2003; Hill, Hawk, & Taylor, 2002; Martin & Robertson, 2003; Timperley, Fung, Wilson, & Barrar, 2006). Effective PD programmes should aim to bring about change that will become embedded in a school's culture. As Guskey (2002) has asserted, in order for professional development to be considered effective, evaluations of such programmes should indicate that the following has occurred:

1. Positive participant reactions;
2. Evidence of participant learning;
3. Changes to organisation structures to support the learning;
4. Transference and use of the knowledge and skills; and
5. Impact on student learning outcomes. (pp. 46-49)

Stoll and Fink (2003) add that team learning is also needed to provide sustained support in a school. Hill et al. (2002) and Ball and Cohen (1999) have both argued for the need for participants to engage in deep learning that directs them away from transmission learning to learning that requires action. This then requires participants to re-examine and re-evaluate the values and beliefs that support their practice, and should lead to change that can be maintained. Hill et al. (2002) further asserts that all who are involved in such a process should have ownership of it.

2.4.1 Professional development for school leaders

Professional development for school leaders is important because of the crucial roles they have in their schools. One of these roles is to bring about change for the improvement of teaching and learning. A number of studies have found that the principal is a major factor in facilitating, improving and promoting change in the school setting and improvement in student learning (Fullan, 2001; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). As Robinson (2007) states “Politicians, policy makers and the public at large are convinced that the quality of school leaders, and of principals in particular, makes a substantial difference to the progress students make at school” (p. 5).

Similarly highlighted in her study on facilitative leadership, Hord (1992) reports that the principal is most often regarded as the facilitator of change. Fullan (2001) has also identified that the school leader acts as a change agent by creating the conditions to develop learning capacity within a school and as the gate keeper of the school. Hence an important role of school leaders is their responsibility for leading and improving instructional activities in their schools.

The findings from research on effective schools has confirmed that the leadership practice of the principal is essential to improving instructional programmes in the school and learning outcomes for students (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Hord, 1992). Effective leadership has a significant impact on improving classroom instruction (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004), hence efforts to improve the recruitment, training, evaluation, and ongoing professional development of school

leaders should be considered a highly cost-effective approach to successful school improvement. As Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) have reported, schools are not able to achieve positive results for their students' achievement in the absence of "talented leadership" (p. 29).

Professional development of school leaders is therefore vital, particularly as societal changes have brought about new pressures on the role of the principal in leading and managing schools. For instance, the promotion of school-based management in many countries (Michaelidou & Pashiardisa, 2009) and the demands for accountability for academic results in schools have added further responsibilities to what could be called the principal's traditional duties of "establishing order and safety, managing the schedule, overseeing the budget, and keeping the overall running of the school on time" (Jewett-Ramirez, 2009, p. 19). This is echoed by Elmore (2002) who has noted that the principals of current schools no longer perform "the ritualistic tasks of organising, budgeting, managing and dealing with disruptions inside the system" (p. 6). Leslie and Mildred (2002) have further pointed out that the principal in the current school setting "is no longer the principal teacher, but rather the manager of an increasingly complex organisation" (p. 2).

Additionally, Drake and Roe (2003) and Pierce (2000) point out that these changes to the role of principals require them to promote collaborative and collegial relationships among teachers, acquire and allocate resources, promote teacher development, improve students' achievement and build effective community relationships (Leslie & Mildred, 2002). According to Prestine (1994), such changes have resulted in "a turning of the role of the principal 90 degrees from everywhere" (p. 150).

The above discussion indicates that in the school setting the principal is a manager and leader of increasingly complex organisations (Leslie & Mildred, 2002). As such, Huber and Pashiardis (2008) assert, it is extremely important for the principal to acquire and develop the capacity to manage the day-to-day organisation of the school, support teachers in their professional endeavours, improve teaching, learning, and students' achievement. Similarly, it is argued that

within the complex and accountability-driven environment of the school it is important that school leaders have access to continuous PD to support their efforts towards school improvement, and to sustain their commitment to creating positive learning communities (Daresh, 2004; Foster, Loving, & Shumate, 2000).

Professional development is increasingly cited as a key mechanism for school improvement (Elmore, 2002; Timperley et al., 2007). McCough (2003) has noted that professional development is one of the three common methods employed to revitalise and support principals' practice. Achilles and Tienken (2005) also contend that the constant reviewing of knowledge and skills can be accomplished by addressing the changes and demands of the principals' roles through professional development. Accordingly, many countries have developed PD programmes for their school leaders as a means to support them in their work (Bush & Jackson, 2002; O'Mahony & Barnett, 2008).

The literature has identified principals' development as having two elements. First, a principal is accountable and responsible for the development of his or her own leadership role and, second, for the development of the knowledge and skills needed to move the school forward (Bush & Glover, 2004; Cardno & Fitzgerald, 2005; Stewart, 2000). Brooke Smith (2003) and Dempster (2001) have both affirmed the equal of organisational aims and personal aims. These authors do, however, acknowledge that an opposition exists here. According to Dempster (2001) there is often more emphasis placed on the kind of PD that is linked with annual and strategic plans which inevitably results in a focus on "immediate school and system goals at the expense of the type of professional development which responds to the personal needs and socio-professional responsibilities of principals" (p. 7). Dempster (2001) concludes that in the New Zealand context more emphasis is placed on organisational learning than on personal learning. This is partly due to the methods by which PD for principals is financed and supported, which clearly put "professional development to work in the interests of the state and inevitably subjects principals to shift their own learning to serve these powerful interests" (Dempster, 2001, p.15).

According to Robbins (2003) there are problems associated with current PD programmes for school leaders. He argues that the design of the programmes is largely standardised, and lacks consideration and serious investigation of evidence based research. This author also claims that current PD programmes have no common definitions of the essential ideas and the methods involved. He further argues that the programmes lack independent and natural scrutiny, leading potentially to over-control of the participants' goals. Similarly Dempster (2001) raises concerns regarding the control and influence that governments, universities, and other higher education providers have on PD programmes and the impact of these on the overall professional development of a principal.

Such concerns were raised by principals in England who expressed their fears about the National College of School Leadership monopolising professional development for school leaders (Stroud, 2005). The principals suggested that they be granted the opportunity to decide for themselves which PD providers could cater for their distinct needs and situations. Dempster (2001) and Weindling (2003) have also argued against the adoption of the professional standards in New Zealand that instruct and guide PD programmes for principal preparation and performance management. As these authors have contended, there are constraints to this kind of approach in that it neglects to recognise the genuine complexity of the principal's role.

A point of further significance in the literature is the notion of "one size fits all". Numerous authors have stressed that this approach should not be applied to leadership development and that consideration should be taken of the participants' experiences, prior learning, career stages, their current needs, and of course their local context (Bright & Ware, 2003; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Hopkins, 2001; Southworth, 1995; West-Burnham, 2004). As Weindling (2003) noted, "The content of leadership development programmes needs to be tailored specifically to the changing needs of the participants and linked to their stages of leadership" (p. 4). Such a view is also evident in a report Hopkins (2001) submitted to a governing council:

Our challenge is to identify a range of opportunities that will enable school leaders with different life experiences to learn effectively within a context that acknowledges their preferred learning style, their personal characteristics and their different working environments. Further the challenge is to design learning opportunities that promote concurrently the continual development of knowledge, skills and understanding, and social and emotional intelligence. (pp. 15-16)

2.4.2 Leadership development in developing countries

In some developing countries such as Kenya, Ghana, and Solomon Islands school leadership preparation programmes are frequently inadequate (Bush, 2008; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Malasa, 2007; Sisiolo, 2010). They are appointed to their leadership positions on the basis of their good teaching records rather than their leadership potential (Malasa, 2007; Bush & Oduro, 2006) and do not obtain any specific management and leadership training prior to their appointments, with few managing to access and attend in-service professional development afterwards. However, as Kitavi and Van der Westhuizen (1997) have warned, a successful teaching record and experience are not necessarily indications that the appointee will be a capable educational leader.

In Ghana it is common practice, especially in rural schools, for head teachers to be left unsupported after appointment; and as Oduro (2003) has pointed out most head teachers assume their duties with little or no knowledge of their job descriptions. Deputy principals in Kenya as well as good assistant teachers are appointed to principalships without any leadership training (Bush & Oduro, 2006). The situation is similar in Ghana, where head teachers are regularly appointed without any form of preparatory training. The appointment of head teachers in these countries and others is largely based on a teacher's seniority in rank and their teaching experience and is based on the assumption that this provides a sufficient starting point for school leadership (Amezu-Kpeglo, 1990; Oduro, 2003; Bush & Oduro, 2006).

Similarly Malasa (2007) has reported that in Solomon Islands the Ministry of Education and Education Authorities do not have preparation programmes for new and serving principals in the schools. He has indicated that such programmes

are important to equip new principals professionally before they take up their leadership positions and this is crucial, particularly for principals who are selected from the classroom.

2.5 Professional Development Strategies

The literature has revealed specific strategies that are effective for the professional development of school leaders. Coaching, mentoring, and the workshop/seminar model are just three of these strategies, and are those focused upon in this literature review.

2.5.1 Coaching as a professional development strategy

Coaching has been defined as the “practice of providing deliberate support to another individual to help him/her to clarify and or to achieve goals” (Bloom, Castagna, Moir & Warren, 2005, p. 5). Some see it as a strategy that focuses only on skill development (Bloom et al., 2005; Earley & Weindling, 2004; Hobson & Sharp, 2005). Holmes (2003) states that “coaching has three key identifying characteristics, a focus on learning, results orientation and involves the development of skills competencies and attitudes” (p. 3). Coaching can involve two people or occur in groups. It can be specifically focussed on a particular participant or be based on a peer relationship whereby both participants play an active role and mutually benefit (Bloom et al., 2005; Robertson, 2005). Robertson (2005) views coaching within the educational context as “a dynamic process that develops uniquely to meet the changing needs of educational leaders” (p. 38).

In recent years a number of authors have explored coaching as an approach for the professional development of school leaders. Robertson (2005), for example, developed a model in which the coaching involves two principals setting and achieving professional goals, being open to new learning, and engaging in dialogue for the purpose of improving leadership practice. A third person observes the interactions and provides professional input. This approach aligns with Glover and Coleman’s (2010) view that coaching is an approach designed specifically for adult learning because it has specific objectives which are “to learn a set of

competencies in regard to a particular role” (p. 167) but also to focus on personal and professional development in the context of their leadership role.

More recent literature has pointed to coaching as allowing for the individual needs of the leader to be met as they focus on their daily issues along with taking the time to reflect critically on their leadership practice (Robertson, 2004a). A further example of a coaching programme developed for experienced principals in Australia is one reported on by O’Mahony and Barnett (2008). The programme involved the use of coaches (on a one-on-one basis) to support and guide experienced school leaders in developing and enhancing their professional effectiveness by drawing on the coaches’ feedback. Another example of the use of coaching as a form of professional development for school leaders is found in Robertson’s (2005) New Zealand study in which veteran principals participated in peer coaching.

It is acknowledged in the literature that coaching as a professional development strategy has both benefits and limitations; however, it is argued that the benefits outweigh the limitations. While there are some limitations in employing a coaching strategy, such as a lack of adequate time to devote to the coaching relationship, difficulty in matching coaches and proteges, inadequate training for coaches, and the difficulty of maintaining the habit of using reflective questioning strategies (Bloom et al., 2005; Hobson, 2003), a number of authors suggest that the positive aspects of coaching outweigh these. They include helping school leaders to identify and address their professional limitations, increasing their self-awareness and confidence, improving skills, enhancing decision making, and improving reflection. Through coaching school leaders can gain a more strategic or “big picture” view of their school and focus more fully on their educational leadership role (Daresh, 2003; O’Mahony & Barnett, 2008). Furthermore, as they become more reflective through coaching they become more willing to learn and more understanding of the complexities of their work (Robertson, 2011; Robertson, 2005; Strong, Barret, & Bloom, 2003; Weindling & Dimmock, 2006).

2.5.2 Mentoring as a professional development strategy

Mentoring has been defined by Kirkham (1995) as two people in the same organisation establishing a supportive and learning relationship which is of benefit to them, while Southworth (1995) defines it within the educational context as “peer support. It is provided by experienced heads for their less experienced colleagues” (p. 18). Buters (2000) defines mentoring as “a framework for positive support [provided] by skilled and experienced practitioners to other practitioners who need to acquire new skills” (p. 97).

The underlying assumption in mentoring approaches is that a more experienced colleague can assist the development of a less experienced colleague (Bush & Glover, 2004; Buters, 2000; Hobson & Sharp, 2005; Southworth, 1995); however, it is more often seen as a reciprocal relationship in which learning is at the centre. Some key points associated with mentoring are that it implies expert on novice, is more general in its approach and is of a longer duration than coaching might be (Bloom et al., 2005; Earley & Weindling, 2004; Hobson & Sharp, 2005).

The literature has described two approaches to mentoring. The first is formal, where the mentoring is arranged through participation in a programme (Hobson & Sharp, 2005; O'Mahony, 2003). Such is the case in New Zealand with beginning principals participating in the First Time Principals programme (Robinson, 2006). The second approach is informal. This is where a mentoring partnership is formed through choice.

Like coaching, mentoring as a form of professional development has its strengths and weaknesses. One of the advantages of mentoring is that mentors provide mentees with practical insights and understandings which mentees need to carry out their work effectively in the real world (Bloom et al., 2005; Bush & Glover, 2004). Other perceived strengths of mentoring include: principals become more aware of their own personal values and assumptions regarding the role of school administration and leadership; it is context based and involves experiential learning; it benefits both mentor and mentee; and it overcomes isolation and offers

emotional support (Bloom et al., 2005; Bush & Glover, 2004; Earley & Weindling, 2004; Kirkham, 1995; Southworth, 1995; Weindling & Dimmock, 2006).

However, there also challenges associated with mentoring. One of the challenges is matching mentors with mentees to ensure success in a mentoring programme (Glover & Coleman, 2010; Ragins, 2002). This matching of the mentors and mentees needs careful attention, especially when people come from diverse backgrounds. Ragins (2002) found that where mentoring involved pairs of different ethnicities, there was often considerable discomfort unless the mentor and mentee clarified exactly how they were going to deal with the issues connected to ethnicity.

Another challenge of mentoring concerns appropriate mentor preparation. Mentors need to be provided with their own professional development so they can carry out their work effectively and successfully, rather than just getting the job over and done with (Glover & Coleman, 2010). Other problems which can limit the effectiveness of mentoring include difficulties with sustaining focus and availability of resources to enable continuation of the programme (Daresh, 2004; Ragins, 2002). Additionally, mentors may become too controlling and try to shape their mentees into clones of themselves, or may present only a narrow perspective on the newcomer's situation (Lashway, 2003). There can also be tensions within the mentoring relationship and the mentee may feel exposed and vulnerable to the influence and control of the mentor (Daresh, 2004).

Despite these considerations in recent times mentoring has been adopted in various forms by many schools as a sound and effective professional development opportunity to enhance the leadership practice of principals. It is clearly a strategy that has been effective for professional development albeit one that should be implemented in different ways to meet the diverse needs of school leaders.

2.5.3 Workshops and seminars

This strategy could be considered one of the most traditional forms of professional development. It requires school leaders' attendance at short-term (usually)

professional development sessions such as workshops and seminars. Often professional development of this kind is designed and organised by others such as education authorities and facilitated by outside experts (Kedzior, 2004; McLennan, 2000; Morwick, 2011; Schlager & Fusco, 2003; Villegas-Reimer, 2003; Timperley et al., 2007). This approach assumes that school leaders need information from external experts to help them improve their work, rather than seeing them as experts in their own profession (Sandholtz, 2002). Countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea do not require compulsory pre-service preparation for school principals but do provide professional development in various forms for school principals once they are appointed (Anderson, Kleinhenz, Mulford, & Gurr, 2008; Cardno & Howse, 2004).

Cardno and Howse's (2004) review of secondary school principals in Fiji showed that principals were engaged in various development activities including management workshops and various types of on-the-job support. Despite having access to professional development workshops and seminars, the principals complained that the implementation of the professional development was ad hoc and that the initiatives were not formalised. In Papua New Guinea, continuing and developmental in-service opportunities for school leaders are provided by the government and private associations (Moorosi & Bush, 2011). And Bush and Oduro (2006) reported that in Ghana "in service" workshops for head teachers have usually been provided by international agencies such as the World Bank, UNESCO, DFID, USAID and CID for selected schools which are mostly drawn from urban and semi-urban areas. However, as Bush and Oduro (2006) have pointed out, once the project is completed the programmes cease because the Ghana Education Service lacks the money to continue them.

While donor countries and international agencies have introduced professional development initiatives, these are rarely sustained beyond the initial funding period. Van der Westhuizen, Mosoge, and van Vuuren (2004) have proposed that the design and content of professional development programmes should be geared towards developing the requisite skills and knowledge to enable participants to transfer their skills and knowledge to their own school context.

One of the major criticisms of in-service approaches such as workshops and seminars is that these forms of professional development are often short, that what is covered is irrelevant to the needs of the participants, and that they do little by themselves to change practice back at their school (McLennan, 2000; Robertson, 2004a; Sutton, 2005; Winters, 1996). Boris-Schacter and Langer (2006) reported that professional meetings and seminars (especially ones that focus on administrative agendas) rarely provide school leaders with experiences that encourage growth in their learning, while McLennan (2000) has highlighted that workshops are “often poorly organised and irrelevant” (p. 305). In addition, Robertson (2005) has claimed that they do not provide opportunity for leaders “to discuss educational leadership with one another or observe each other in practice” (p. 46). Villegas-Reimer (2003) also noted that a weakness of in-service workshop is that the facilitators are either not able to or do not carry out follow-up visits or workshops to monitor the implementation of what has been learned and as a result participants fail to put into practice what they have learnt.

Nevertheless, workshops and seminars as forms of professional development can be successful, especially when supported by other types of professional development (Villegas-Reimer, 2003). For example, Zeegers (1995) reported that in New Zealand a series of workshops was designed and conducted for science teachers to prepare them to teach the new national science curriculum. These workshops were followed up by supplementary supportive and informative visits from in-service facilitators and the results were positive. Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000) have also reported that traditional forms of professional development such as workshops can be effective as long as they have appropriate duration, the content is relevant, active learning underpins it, and it has coherence.

2.6 The Solomon Islands Context

In Solomon Islands there is no established national professional development programme in place for practising primary school head teachers. Head teachers are usually appointed without specific preparation, receive no induction, have very limited access to suitable in-service training and have little professional support from their provincial education authorities and the national government

(Rugebatu, 2008; Malasa, 2007). Lack of preparation and professional support for school leaders in Solomon Islands has posed enormous challenges for the school leaders and remains the biggest obstacle for school leaders to carry out their work effectively (Rugebatu, 2008; Ministry of Education, 2005). This had resulted in a number of the school leaders leaving when confronted by challenge beyond their capability to understand and resolve (Rugebatu, 2008).

From my observations as a former education officer who has worked for several years in the education sector in Solomon Islands, one clear reason for this unsatisfactory situation is that the country has a very limited educational budget and leadership preparation and in-service programmes for school leaders are seen as low priority. Another problem is the lack of proficiency among officers responsible for appointing, training, and supporting head teachers in the provincial education authorities. Many of these officers are no more qualified than the head teachers.

There is no national leadership development programme in place for head teachers, and there are limited leadership development opportunities available for them in the country. One example is that reported by Sanga and Houma (2004), where the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education initiated a project which was funded by NZAID and implemented by the Department of Education at the University of the South Pacific (USP). This programme involves a series of summer schools leading to a USP Diploma in Educational Leadership and Change. Both primary head teachers and secondary principals who are currently serving in schools are eligible to apply for this programme with the selection process carried out by the Ministry of Education. In addition, the Ministry of Education facilitates workshops and seminars for head teachers and principals (Rugebatu, 2008). These workshops tend to focus on areas relating to the administrative duties of head teachers and principals and are usually conducted on an ad hoc basis (Akao, 2008; Sisiolo, 2010).

Rugebatu (2008) and Malasa (2007) found that school leaders in Solomon Islands lack knowledge and understanding of current educational theory and practice. Accordingly they suggest there is serious need to develop in-service programmes

for continued professional learning for schools leaders in Solomon Islands. The importance of such continuous professional support for head teachers in Solomon Islands is being recognised but the Ministry of Education has yet to design and provide a professional development programme for its school leaders that is appropriate, practicable, and effective for the Solomon Islands context. Bush and Oduro (2006), however, assert that there should not be a “one size fits all” approach to leadership development, while Weindling (2003) adds that “the content of leadership development programmes needs to be tailored specifically to the changing needs of the participants and linked to their stages of leadership” (p. 4).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The design of a research project is “governed by the notion of fitness for purpose” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p.78). It guides the theoretical, analytical, and practical underpinnings for the research (Creswell, 2003). According to Burns (2000) and Kumar (1996), education research is a process of systematic investigation to surface a certain issue or phenomenon related to education in order to explore and address issues, or to increase knowledge of the world. Mutch (2005) has differentiated educational research from other types of studies by “its focus - people, places and processes broadly related to teaching and learning systems and practices for the betterment of all concerned and society at large” (p. 18).

The purpose of this research project was to investigate the impact of a New Zealand Aid funded Professional Development Programme (PDP) on developing the understanding of primary school head teachers in Makira Ulawa Province (MUP) in Solomon Islands of their responsibilities and roles, and on increasing their effectiveness as school leaders. It is anticipated that the findings could be used to guide the Ministry of Education and provincial education authorities to develop appropriate policies and programmes for the professional development of school leaders in Solomon Islands. It is also anticipated that the findings will help to bring about improvement in the work of school leaders in Makira Ulawa Province and potentially in Solomon Islands as a whole. With this purpose in mind the study seeks to answer the following key questions:

1. What were the professional learning experiences of the head teachers participating in the professional development programme?
2. In what ways has the professional development programme influenced the head teachers’ effectiveness as school leaders?

3. What views do the head teachers hold about the purpose and implications of professional development? Have these changed as a result of their training?
4. In what ways do the facilitators consider that the head teachers have become more effective school leaders?

This chapter describes the paradigms of educational research, followed by descriptions of the research methodology, ethical considerations and the method of data collection used for this research. First, the three paradigms that educational research is usually classified under are outlined. Second, the interpretive methodology adopted for this study and the qualitative characteristics of the research are discussed. The ethical considerations identified as relevant to this study are then focused upon, followed by the research method used to gather data.

3.2 Paradigms

Educational research is usually grouped into one of three paradigms: positivist, critical and interpretive (Lather, 2006). A paradigm or world view is “a basic set of beliefs that guide action (Guba,1990, p. 17). These different paradigms provide three different conceptual lenses or perspectives for how a researcher comes to understand the world, social reality, and knowledge.

The positivist paradigm assumes that knowledge is objective and universal, and that it can be verified through controlled investigations (Cohen et al., 2007; Lather, 2006). On the other hand, the critical paradigm holds that knowledge is subjective and is influenced by power and politics, thus a researcher’s role is to facilitate and encourage change. An interpretive paradigm assumes that knowledge is constructed and that this occurs through communication and interpretation, such as when a researcher interacts with people to develop comprehensive understandings with them (Cohen et al., 2007; Lather, 2006). For the purpose of this research an interpretive paradigm was deemed most appropriate and is discussed further in the next section.

3.3 Interpretive methodology

This study is situated within an interpretive research methodology. This methodology retains the ideals of researcher objectivity, with the researcher being the passive collector and expert interpreter of data. Importantly, it is grounded on the data generated by the research method (Cohen et al., 2007).

Interpretivists hold that knowledge is constructed, interpreted, and experienced by individuals only when they interact with one another. The assumption is that people are social beings and as such they are capable of creating subjective meanings about their own contexts based on their life experiences, actions, and interaction with others (Bouma, 1996; Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). They argue that each individual is unique and that they experience the world in different ways. In particular, interpretivists are concerned with how individuals make meaning (Bouma, 1996; Cohen et al., 2007), and thus seek to uncover, describe, analyse, and interpret the meanings and experiences of their research participants (Borko, Liston, & Whitcomb, 2007).

Some of the challenges of interpretive research are that it allows the researcher to create his or her own meaning from the data (Borko, Liston & Whitcomb, 2007; Markula, Grant, & Denison, 2001). Furthermore it tends to neglect the power of those external influences that may shape people's behaviour and events (Cohen et al., 2007). Nevertheless, I adopted an interpretive methodology for this study because it would enable me to interpret the data generated by my research participants.

3.3.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is typically located within an interpretive research paradigm (Keeves as cited in Boubée-Hill, 1998). It usually includes approaches such as case studies, ethnography, phenomenology, and grounded theory. These approaches enable researchers to generate descriptive accounts of the unique lived experiences of the participants to enhance understanding of a particular phenomenon (Bell, 1993; Maynard, 1994; Mutch, 2005).

3.4 The interview as a qualitative method of data collection

Interviews are a method of data collection that ranges from unstructured interactions through to semi-structured situations and highly formal interaction with participants. Interviews, according to Cohen and Manion (1994), are defined as “a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information” (p. 271). And Bishop (1997) describes the conversational nature of interviews as being similar to “collaborative storytelling by means of sequential, semi-structured, in-depth interviews as conversation that facilitates on-going collaborative analysis and construction of meaning/ explanations about the lived experiences of the research participants” (p. 29).

The participants in this study were involved in one semi-structured interview each and asked open-ended questions (O’Leary, 2004). This type of interview allowed me to probe participants’ responses to the initial interview questions and enabled them to provide rich and descriptive responses (Bell, 1999). As Burns (2000) and Cohen et al. (2007) have noted, one advantage of the semi-structured interview is its flexibility both as a research tool for gathering data and as a means of social interaction between the interviewer and interviewees. As such, this method provided me with the opportunity to interact with the participants in their work settings, and to modify or change the wording for each of the interview questions if appropriate (Cohen et al., 2007).

There are some challenges inherent in using the semi-structured interview as a research method. For example, a researcher needs to be competent and confident in conducting the interviews and must make sure to avoid bias. An interview can become biased when an interviewer is not consistent with the time spent with each interviewee and with the way questions are asked (Gray, 2009). The researcher also needs to be aware that interviews are time consuming. Furthermore, there is no anonymity when interviews are conducted face to face and this could cause participants to constrain their responses (Sarantakos, 1993).

Being aware of these challenges has helped me to make all necessary efforts to address them when I conducted the interviews. For example, I was careful of the way I managed time during the interviews and aimed to establish a sound relationship with each participant. Accordingly, I allocated equal time for each participant and I ask did my best to ask questions in the same manner.

3.5 Ensuring validity and trustworthiness

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) there are different kinds of validity. The validity and trustworthiness of a piece of research are very important for its integrity. In other words, the conclusions that researchers come up with should be accurate and trustworthy and there should be a clear relationship between what is studied and what is reported. As O'Leary (2004) elaborates:

Validity is premised on the assumption that what is being studied can be measured or captured, and seeks to confirm the truth and accuracy of this measured and captured data, as well as the truth and accuracy of any findings or conclusions drawn from the data. It indicates that the conclusions you have drawn are trustworthy. There is a clear relationship between the reality that is studied and the reality that is reported, with cohesion between the conceptual frameworks, questions asked, and findings evident (p. 61).

Conclusions therefore, need to be justified from what was found, and what was found needs to accurately reflect what has been studied (O'Leary, 2004). The semi-structured interview method I used in my research is an effective way of finding out about people's inner feelings because researchers have the opportunity to probe more deeply into people's feelings and experiences. However, if researchers are not careful this can distort the data. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) have argued that because interviews involve interpersonal interactions or people interacting with each other it is inevitable that the interviewer will have some influence over the interviewee and the data. For instance, this can occur through the researcher giving a leading question to the participants or putting words into their mouths, so that the questions influence the responses (Cohen et al., 2007).

Consequently, to enhance the validity of data for this study, I used more open-ended questions. The importance of open-ended questions is that they enable respondents to demonstrate their unique way of looking at a situation (Silverman, 2005). I used two lenses in my interviews: that of the head teachers who had participated in the professional development programme, and that of the facilitators. The questions for the head teachers and the Solomon Islands facilitators were conducted in the Solomon Islands' national language, Pidgin, so they could express their experiences as clearly as possible. For the New Zealand facilitators, the English language was used. After the interviews had been transcribed, the participants were given the opportunity to verify the information they had provided during the interviews by reading through and commenting on their transcripts.

3.6 Research process: Conducting the interviews

Participants took part in a twenty to thirty minute face-to-face, semi-structured interview. Once the interviews had been conducted and transcribed, the interview transcripts were returned to the participants for confirmation of their accuracy and any further comment. The data were thematically analysed and are discussed in Chapter Five. As stated above, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in Solomon Islands Pidgin and English to allow participants to comfortably and clearly express themselves during the interviews. All of the interviews were digitally recorded. As the researcher, my attention was focused on the participants and the experiences they shared. During and after each interview I recorded informal notes in my journal. Interview notes provide a useful supplement for recording the non-verbal expressions of the participants and as a source of back-up notes (Bell, 1999; Burns, 2000).

3.6.1 Participants

Six primary school head teachers who participated in the New Zealand Aid Professional Development Programme and two facilitators were selected as the sample for this research project. Purposive sampling was employed to select the participants (Mutch, 2005). This is where participants are selected intentionally

(Creswell, 2002) because they suit the purpose of the study (Mutch, 2005); for this research this meant the participants were the head teachers and facilitators who had actually been involved in the New Zealand Aid PDP

Letters of invitation were sent to the six head teachers. The letter of the invitation outlined the research intentions and the expectations of the participants. Participants had the opportunity to discuss the research with the researcher prior to signing the informed consent (Appendix D).

3.7 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis deals with the meaningful talk and action (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) that arises from the research method. In this research project, a thematic data analysis approach was adopted. It is a strategy commonly used for analysing and reporting qualitative data (Mutch, 2005). It enables categories to be drawn from the data and focuses on identifiable themes and patterns (Aronson, 1994).

3.8 Ethical procedures adopted for the study

The following procedures were adopted to ensure ethical considerations were attended to.

3.8.1 Access to participants

Primary schools in Makira Ulawa Province are owned by the state and administered by the Ministry of Education through the Makira Ulawa Provincial Education Authorities. Therefore, in seeking permission I wrote two letters. One letter was written to the Permanent Secretary (PS) of MEHRD, seeking permission to conduct the research in schools in Solomon Islands (Appendix A) and the other to the Provincial Secretary (PS) of Makira Ulawa Province (MUP) to seek permission to conduct the research in schools in the province (Appendix B). Makira Ulawa Province was chosen because it was this province in which the PDP was conducted. The procedure used to recruit participants and obtain

informed consent is detailed as follows: First, I wrote to the Chief Education Officer (CEO) of Makira Ulawa Education Authority (MUEA) (Appendix C) to ask for the names of the head teachers and facilitators who participated in the New Zealand Aid funded PDP and are currently serving in primary schools in the province. Second, I sent invitation letters to six head teachers and two facilitators. To protect the identity of the head teachers and facilitators, this request for permission was in the form of a general letter without any identification of specific schools (Appendices D & E).

3.8.2 Informed consent

The head teachers and facilitators that participated in this research project were informed of the purpose and procedures of the study in invitation letters (Appendices D & E). I ensured that they understood the nature of the research and any possible impact on them personally and professionally. Those who agreed to participate signed and returned a consent form (Appendix F).

3.8.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality was upheld throughout the research and participants assured that any data provided would remain confidential and would not be disclosed for any purpose other than for academic purposes. It was essential that information shared by the participants was kept confidential at all times. No potentially damaging issues revealed about others were included in the data analysis. No one other than the researcher and his supervisor had access to the raw data.

It must be acknowledged, however, that there is potential for the schools and the Makira Ulawa Education Office to be identified because that is where my work as an educational officer is carried out. Participants were made aware of this.

3.8.4 Potential harm to participants

The participants in this research project understood the nature and consequences of their participation. The nature of this inquiry was primarily positive. My purpose for interviewing these participants was to understand more fully their

experiences in participating in the New Zealand Aid funded PDP with a view to learning about how professional development for school leaders affects their understanding of the roles and effectiveness as school leaders. My hope is that the interview and study as a whole were mutually beneficial.

3.8.5 Participants' right to decline to participate and right to withdraw

The participants had the right to decline the invitation to participate in this research. They were made aware of their right to withdraw without fear of any consequences. Participants were advised that they could withdraw up to seven days after confirming the accuracy of their interview transcripts (Appendices G & H).

3.8.6 Arrangements for participants to receive information

Information was conveyed to participants through email and telephone for those who had access to the technologies. For the participants who did not have access to either email or telephone, information were sent by mail.

3.8.7 Use of the information

Data collected were used solely for the purposes of this research project and any presentations or publications that may arise from it. I understand that I will need to seek further consent from the participants if I wish to use the data for purposes other than those indicated above.

3.8.8 Conflicts of interest

My intention was to interview the participants about their experiences in participating in the New Zealand Aid funded PDP I was not involved in this particular professional development programme, thus had no conflict of interest. I sought to maintain a professional relationship with participants throughout the course of the research.

3.8.9 Procedure for resolution of disputes

The participants were well informed of the procedures for resolving disputes related to the research at the commencement of the study. Participants were asked to contact my supervisor if they had concerns about this research. The contact details of my supervisor were included in the letter of invitation (Appendices D & E).

3.8.10 Other ethical concerns relevant to the research

During the research process, I ensured that the interview questions guided the interaction. In this way, the participants were not made to feel that their privacy had been invaded or that their time had been improperly used. In view of the small and close-knit communities in Solomon Islands, maintaining anonymity for research participants can be a challenge. Every step was taken to ensure that the identities of the participants in this study were not publicly revealed.

The interview data collected from participants were not attributed to any specific participant but were analysed using identification codes to ensure anonymity. Raw interview data and recordings were securely stored. I assured the participants in the study that their identities and that of their schools and institutions would not be revealed in the final research report or at any time during the process of data interpretation, transcription, or analysis. In addition to the above, my research project conformed to the University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Regulations 2007 and the Solomon Islands Research Act of 1982.

3.8.11 Cultural and social considerations

As a citizen of Solomon Islands, I was very aware of the cultural backgrounds of my participants. This included familiarity with the accepted cultural protocols within the school communities. Since I conducted my research in the Solomon Islands, I am required by the Solomon Islands Research Act of 1982 to submit a copy of the final report to the Ministry of Education

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This study explored the impact of the New Zealand Aid Professional Development Programme (PDP) on the effectiveness of school leaders in Solomon Islands. The study was carried out in Makira Ulawa Province (MUP), one of the nine provinces in the country. It is important to note that the study set out to represent the impacts the PDP have on the understanding head teachers have of their role and responsibilities and on their effectiveness as school leaders.

The study's findings, however, might not necessarily represent the impact of other similar professional development programmes conducted for school leaders in other provinces in Solomon Islands. In addition, the study was conducted with primary school head teachers only, therefore it may not reflect the impact the PDP had on the effectiveness of the secondary school principals in the province (In Solomon Islands primary heads are called head teachers and secondary heads are called principals). This study is the first of its kind in MUP and in Solomon Islands, hence the findings may raise important issues regarding the provision of professional development programmes and support for school leaders in MUP and Solomon Islands as a whole.

The key questions that guided the study were:

1. What were the professional learning experiences of the head teachers participating in the professional development programme?
2. In what ways has the professional development programme influenced the head teachers' effectiveness as school leaders?

3. What views do the head teachers hold about the purpose and implications of professional development? Have these changed as a result of their training?
4. In what ways do the facilitators consider that the head teachers have become more effective school leaders?

The study adopted the qualitative method and used the semi-structured interview to gather data. The semi-structured interviews were based on prepared questions from two different interview schedules for two groups of participants (head teachers and the PDP facilitators). The data were analysed and themes that appeared to be significant to the study were identified. A number of common themes emerged from the head teachers' interviews.

The first theme relates to the head teachers' professional learning experiences during the PDP. Within this theme the categories include: *development of school vision and goals; development of action plans to improve teaching and learning; teacher appraisal; improved understandings of roles and responsibilities*. The second theme is associated with the impact of the PDP as experienced by the head teachers, and is characterised as cooperation. The two most common categories for this theme are *team work* and *improved community relationships*. The third theme to emerge from the head teachers' interviews is based on their views of professional development and learning: *workshops, short courses, in-service training, and staff development* are identified as important categories. The last theme is to do with the challenges encountered by head teachers in relation to their roles and responsibilities. This theme's categories include *limited community support, lack of appropriate qualifications, lack of resources, untrained teachers and role stereotype*. Interviews with the second group of participants, the facilitators, led to the identification of three themes. The first is related to the facilitators' views on the PDP. They described the PDP as *school based; open-ended and individual* and as *a potential strategy to provide support for head teachers*. A second theme is about addressing cultural issues, for instance *personal conduct*. The third theme is associated with the challenges experienced by the facilitators when conducting the PDP. Here, the facilitators

experienced *challenges with the nature of the PDP, physical challenges and lack of commitment by some head teachers.*

Themes common to the two groups also emerged. In particular they relate to the impact of PDP as experienced and perceived by both the head teachers and the facilitators. These common themes are an *improved focus on teaching and, and improved management and supervision of teachers.*

In the following section I present and elaborate on the findings. The findings from the two groups of participants are described separately, with the findings from the head teacher interviews presented first.

4.2 Professional learning experiences of the head teachers

4.2.1 Development of school vision and goals

One of the learning experiences of the head teachers during the PDP was that they discovered how to develop a school vision and set goals for their school. Having the opportunity to learn and develop their own local school vision and set of goals was a new learning experience for most of these head teachers.

Antonio is one of the two female head teachers who participated in the study. She has been the head teacher of Bina primary school for the last four years:

From my experience the NZ Aid professional development programme for head teachers that I attended was very good and helpful....This is because I was able to learn some of the important things that I need to know as a head teacher....Things that I did not know before....This is because I was just an ordinary class teacher... before I was promoted to the head teacher's post so some of the things that I did not know....I learnt them from this training[PDP]....For example, I learnt ...how to lead a school by firstly creating the aims, goals and vision for the school to make a school a good school...or a good learning place for the children. With the help of the facilitator I had developed a vision for my school and set of goals that my teachers and I will work towards to achieve....Like in the past years I was heading the school without any clear set goals. This is a new learning for me and my teachers and we are really happy with it. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

Keni is the other female head teacher who participated in this study. She has been the head teacher of Kirio Primary School for the last five years and also highlighted that learning how to develop her own school vision and goals was important knowledge that she gained from the PDP.

One important area that the facilitator of the NZ Aid professional development programme helped me with was related to how to develop my own school's vision and goals for my school. It was really interesting and helpful for me because I use my school vision and goals to guide my planning and the learning activities in the school. The facilitator greatly helped me with this. Not like in the past years where I only relied on the Ministry of Education's guide lines. (Keni, 4/5/12)

Nelson is another head teacher who revealed a similar learning experience. He had been the head teacher of Noabu Primary School for four years. He reported:

An example of something that I learnt from the facilitator of PDP which I think is very important was how to develop a vision and set of goals for my own school. This was a new thing for me and it was interesting and helpful because with the vision and goals ... mmm...it's like I have a direction or something I am guided by and work towards in my school....Not like before where I just looked after this school without any simple or clear direction. (Nelson, 18/5/12)

As school leaders, having the knowledge knowing to develop a vision and set of goals for one's own school is important as these help to provide the head teachers with clear directions for leading their schools.

4.2.2 Development of an action plan to improve teaching and learning

Developing an action plan to improve teaching and learning was another common learning experience revealed in the study. As with the PDP, each head teacher was guided by the facilitators to develop an action plan. They did this by identifying a particular aspect regarding learning in their school that needs improvement. They then designed their action plan by stating the area that they wanted to improve, the objective, who would be involved and the strategies that they would use to achieve their objective. The head teachers then worked with their teachers to implement the plan.

Harry, the head teacher of Kiokio Primary for eleven years, commented:

This professional development programme [PDP] helped me to learn how to design an action plan to improve teaching and learning. I learnt not only how to design an action plan but also how to implement it. I learnt how to develop the action plan by working alongside the facilitator as well as how to work together with my teachers (team work in planning for learning) and how to supervise them, especially in implementing our plan. (Harry, 9/5/12)

Antonio also elaborated on this area. She commented that the facilitator of the PDP had worked with her on an action plan to help students' learning, especially in reading:

The facilitator helped and guided me to design an action plan for teaching and assessing reading in my school and it was wonderful.... With the help of the facilitator I worked with my teachers on an action plan to improve students' reading. I think this type programme is very important for us head teachers, especially for me where I lack the knowledge and skills to lead a school. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

Similarly, Nelson stressed that the knowledge he gained from developing an action plan to improve students' learning had helped him to guide and support his teachers:

The New Zealand Aid professional development programme that I participated in was very helpful. The facilitator actually attached and works with me in my school. The facilitator assisted me on how to develop an action plan to improve teaching and the learning of the students in the school....The knowledge I learnt from this is very helpful because as a head teacher I can assist my teachers to improve teaching and learning in the school, instead of continuing teaching the same things and using the same teaching method every time.... mmm...maybe I should have learnt such knowledge before. (Nelson, 18/5/12)

Furthermore, Harry revealed that the PDP had helped him to realise that planning for learning is an important aspect of his role as a school leader:

This professional development programme has helped me to see that planning to improve student learning is an important part of my role and responsibility as head teacher. (Harry, 9/5/12)

Learning to develop action plans to improve learning was an important learning experience for the head teachers as the knowledge and skills they acquired helped them bring about improvement for teaching and learning for the students in their schools.

4.2.3 Teacher appraisal

The head teachers identified that the PDP had an impact on their knowledge and understanding of teacher appraisal and said that they considered it a useful aspect of their professional learning. They revealed that they were able to learn the basic knowledge and skills to appraise their teachers from the PDP.

As Nelson explained:

I learnt from the facilitator how to undertake appraisal of my teachers...and the importance of giving them feedback and feed forward for improvement....The concept of giving feedback and feed forward is new for me, especially when appraising my teachers. (Nelson, 18/5/12)

Keni reported a similar experience:

I also undertake regular observations and appraisal of my teachers. With the appraisal I usually meet with teachers individually and I give them feedback based on how I observe their work performance....I then work with each one of them on how to improve. I learnt this appraisal process from the facilitator of the New Zealand Aid professional development programme. I think it is a very good strategy for us head teachers to help teachers. (Keni, 4/5/12)

Harry and Antonio also stressed that they appraised their teachers regularly:

I ... appraise my teachers with their teaching on regular basis by visiting my teachers' classes and observing their teaching and then after I give them feedback to help them improve....This was one of the areas that was emphasised by the facilitator of the training who I worked with in my school. (Harry, 9/5/12)

The head teachers had clearly adopted the concept of appraisal which they learnt from the PDP as a strategy to monitor, evaluate, and make improvements to the work performance of their teachers.

4.2.4 Improved understandings of roles and responsibilities

Most of the head teachers expressed that the PDP had helped them to better understand their roles and responsibilities. Antonio commented that she was just an ordinary teacher before being promoted to the head teacher's post so she lacked the specialised knowledge and skills required for her new position. However, she said that the PDP had given her the chance to obtain certain important knowledge and skills to help her with her work as a school leader:

I was able to learn some of the important things that I need to know as a head teacher....Things that I did not know before....This is because I was just an ordinary class teacher... before I was promoted to the head teacher's post, so some of the things that I did not know...I learnt them from this training....For example, I learnt how to supervise teachers so that they can teach well in their classes and I also learnt how to assess students' learning abilities, especially in reading... [and] how to lead a school by firstly creating aims, goals and vision for the school to make a school a good school...or a good learning place for the children. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

Nelson's learning experience was similar. He explained:

The PDP has helped me to better understand some of my role's responsibilities. For example, in working with one of the facilitators as my mentor for two weeks in my school, I learnt how to provide support for my teachers, especially with their teaching and I now carry out this strategy in my school....For example, I regularly visit my teachers to see how they are getting on with their work and give them feedback for improvement. (Nelson, 18/5/12)

Harry is another head teacher who expressed the same experience as Nelson and Antonio:

All along in the past years, I concentrated more on performing management and administration duties. For example, monitoring of teachers' and students' attendance, purchasing and managing of school resources, managing and keeping records of the school granting and so forth. I think the PDP has helped me to see to that as a head teacher I must not only concentrate in

administering and managing the operational matters of the school but also leading teaching and learning in the school, such as planning to improve student learning ... and supervision and providing guidance for my teachers. This is an area that I had overlooked in the past years in my role as a head teacher. This type of school support is very good and helpful because you work at the same time you learn. (Harry, 9/5/12)

4.3 Cooperation

Cooperation was a major theme that emerged from the findings as being associated with the impact of the PDP as experienced by the head teachers. It was categorised into two areas, namely team work and improved community relationships.

4.3.1 Team work

The findings highlighted that one significant area which most head teachers now practise at their schools as a result of participating in the PDP is team work. According to the PDP, team work is referred to as teachers working together in mutual understanding as they are guided by the fundamental goal of the school, to provide effective teaching and learning for the students. However, the head teachers interpreted the term according to the needs of their school.

Keni reported that she encouraged team work in her school by distributing the different roles and responsibilities in the school amongst her teachers. She then supervised them to ensure that they carry out the responsibilities assigned to them:

Team work was one of the areas that we were encouraged to practise in our schools, during the New Zealand Aid PDP that I participated in. We practised team work in the school and now I can see positive effects of working together with my teachers.... For example, I can see that my teachers are more committed to perform whatever responsibilities they are given because we plan and make decisions together... so I think team work is a good strategy to apply in a school. (Keni, 4/5/12)

Nelson revealed that he involved his teachers in team teaching and had delegated leadership supervisory responsibilities to his senior teachers:

As the result of this NZ Aid PDP, I have been able to plan for my teachers so that we work or teach together as a team. We do team teaching. With this concept of team teaching I divided the different classes in my school into three groups ...that is...Kindergarten, year 1 and year 2 are in one group...Year 3 and 4 are in the second group and years 5 and 6 form the third groupTeachers of these different groups are required to plan and work together.... I appointed my deputy to look after one group, my senior teacher is responsible for the second group and myself the third group.... I share the responsibility of supervising and supporting the teachers in the three groups amongst my leadership team.... My deputy and senior teacher are required to supervise, monitor, appraise and provide other professional support as may be needed from time to time for the teachers in their group. (Nelson, 18/5/12)

Antonio commented that she led the learning in the school by working in collaboration with her teachers:

I must lead the learning in the school through working together with my teachers and we plan together to improve students' learning. This was new for me and my teachers and we are really happy with it. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

This was further highlighted by Harry:

I learnt how to work together with my teachers as a team and how to supervise them, especially in implementing our action plan. (Harry, 9/5/12)

4.3.2 Improved community relationships

The head teachers also revealed that they had improved their relationships with their school communities and parents. Timo, the head teacher of Masi Primary for two and half years, commented that the PDP had impacted on his personal character and on his relationships with school community and parents:

The knowledge and the skills that I learnt from the PDP, I think they help me to improve my personality and my role as a head teacher to perform my duties, that is why if you look at my school there are changes taking place in the school and how I ... for example, I visit my community, talk with them regarding their support for the school and their children. I have improved my working relationship with the community and I started to notice that when I communicated regularly with parents and school community their support for the school started to improve. I also improved in controlling my temperMaybe leaders should show such an attitude. (Timo, 3/5/12)

Antonio reported that one of her challenges was limited parental and community support, but after attending the PDP she had improved her relationship with her school community and this resulted in improved community support for the school:

Yes,... one of the challenges that I face is poor community and parent support.... During my first two years as a head teacher I found it difficult with poor community and parent support ... but with New Zealand Aid PDP that I attended when I was in my third year as a head teacher... I raised this issue with the training facilitator and together we designed ways to address this problem.... So in this third year I applied the strategiesand that is as a school leader, firstly, I must be transparent in everything I do in the school in order to gain community trust and support,... that is, I must be transparent with the school finance As a head teacher I must let the community members and parents know how the school uses the school money.... Also I must let the community members and parents know how I run the administration of the school.... My contact and relationship with the community has improved and also I notice that community and parent support have improved a lot from the past years. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

The same situation was further highlighted by Harry:

You know with the training that I involved in, I mean the New Zealand Aid Professional and Learning Programme ... the facilitator told me that I needed to improve my relationship with the school community and we worked on certain ways to go about it. So now I am doing it. Like I hold regular meetings with parents and explain certain things with them. I also invite them to come to school if they want any information or are concerned about any issues.... I also provide them with reports on how the school uses the school grant.... My relationship with parents and my school community have improved very much and now I start to notice that community support has started to improve. Ma be it will improve further if I continue to work closely with them. (Harry, 9/5/12)

4.4 Head teachers' views on professional development and learning

4.4.1 Workshops

Most of the head teachers in the study referred to professional development and professional learning as being when someone attended or participated in workshops. They felt that professional development and learning are important for

teachers as these will enable teachers to gain the knowledge and skills to help them in their work. There was a preference articulated by all participants for a workshop style of professional development. In sharing her view on these two concepts Antonio explained:

I think professional development and learning in my view is attending workshops, because for us teachers, we are going to learn new knowledge and skills from such workshops and trainings. These knowledge and skills that we gain will help us with our roles in the school. It is when we continue to learn. So I think professional development is important for us teachers. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

Timo, Nelson, Harry and Keni held similar views:

Professional development and learning is ...when you attend workshops or other training and you learn new things. I mean new knowledge and skills. You develop, learn and gain new knowledge as a result of the workshop or training that you attended to help us with our work. This is what I think or my personal view. (Timo, 3/5/12)

[P]rofessional development is like when we teachers went to attend workshops. (Nelson, 18/5/12)

I see professional development and learning as attending of workshops ... so that we can do our work in the school properly. (Harry, 9/5/12)

Professional development and learning are practised in this school. In my view these two terms mean learning new knowledge and skills ... during workshops. (Keni, 4/5/12)

4.4.2 Short courses

The head teachers also use the term *short courses* to refer to professional development and professional learning. Nelson gave an example of the PDP as a short course and stated that the short course is a good thing as head teachers gain necessary knowledge and skills from such opportunities:

Professional development is like when we teachers went to attend ... short courses like the New Zealand Aid Professional Development Programme that I attended...and it is a good thing because teachers are able to learn new knowledge and skill that would help them in their work if they practice what they learnt. (Nelson, 18/5/12)

Keni of Kirio Primary School shared the same view:

In my view these two terms mean learning new knowledge and skills ... during... short courses or even during staff development meetings. (Keni, 4/5/12)

This perception was further highlighted by Antonio's comment during her interview:

I think professional development and learning in my view is attending ... short courses. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

4.4.3 In-service training

Another term that was commonly used by the head teachers was *in-service training*. It was used to refer to professional development and learning. Harry viewed professional development and learning as being when someone goes onto further studies to further his or her knowledge and skills:

I see professional development and learning as ... going to college to upgrade our knowledge and skills so that we can do our work in the school properly. (Harry, 9/5/12)

This perception was also reported by Antonio:

I think professional development and learning in my view is ... going for further studies. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

4.4.4 Staff development meeting

The head teachers perceived staff development meetings, too, as professional development and learning. This view was highlighted by Harry, Antonio and Keni:

I see professional development and learning as attending of ... staff development meetings. (Harry, 9/5/12)

I think professional development and learning in my view is attending staff development meetings. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

In my view these two terms [professional development and professional learning] mean learning new knowledge and skills ... during staff development meetings. (Keni, 4/5/12)

What appears to be a narrow view of the concepts of professional development and professional learning may be due to the participants' lack of knowledge and understanding in these areas. This idea is discussed in the next chapter.

4.5 Challenges encountered by the head teachers in implementing their roles and responsibilities

As a result of their participation in the PDP the head teachers in the study were able to identify and reveal the common challenges that they faced in their professional lives. The first common challenge reported by the head teachers was poor community support.

4.5.1 Limited community support

Harry pointed out that community response to invitations to work in his school or to participate in school fundraising activities was usually poor:

One of the challenges is to do with community....This concerns poor response from the community in terms of support for the school ... especially with work (maintaining of buildings etc.) in the school and fundraising. Some community members do not take part in these activities. (Harry, 9/5/12)

Nelson stated that in his school the communities that showed poor participation were those that lived far from the school. For other communities he had to find other ways to encourage them to participate in the physical work programmes of the school:

Community and parent participation is also another challenge that I face as a head teacher This does not apply to everyone, but some.... Some community member or parents do not participate well in school activities and work that requires them to participate.... Their participation ... as I have experienced, is poor and weak....This is especially for far away parents.... For other community members, I have to really stand behind them before they participate well. (Nelson, 18/5/12)

Keni also considered limited community support a challenge. She experienced limited commitment by parents and community members, especially with work related to Aid funded school building projects, which require parents and community to contribute labour. As a result she has had to involve both her teachers and students in undertaking certain physical work in the school that parents and community members have failed or are unable to do:

Another challenge I face in this school concerns poor participation by parents and school community.... For example, the money to build toilets for the students is provided by AusAid and it is up to the parent and community to construct it but at this very moment this project is about to be completed.... [and]only the students and teachers are ones who collect materials for the toilets. The school chairperson called upon everyone to work on this project but no one responded. Parents' participation in the school is very weak. (Keni, 4/5/12)

Timo and Antonio were the other two head teachers who described the same challenge with their school communities and parents:

I face a lot of challenges and one of the main one is poor community support. (Timo, 3/5/12)

One of the challenges that I face is poor community and parent support.... During my first two years as a head teacher I found it difficult with poor community and parent support. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

Lack of community support is a common issue experienced by the head teachers. This, however, may be due to parents' ignorance of their responsibilities for the education of their children. Furthermore, it is a common view in many school communities in the province that it is the government that owns the schools and it should therefore be responsible for developing and resourcing these schools.

4.5.2 Lack of appropriate qualifications

The second challenge commonly experienced by the head teachers was the lack of appropriate qualifications. They noted that their certificates in primary teaching only prepared them to teach in the classroom and had not equipped them for the work of a head teacher.

As Nelson elaborated:

My certificate of teaching qualification only prepared me for teaching in the classroom. I mean this qualification [certificate in teaching] provided me with very little knowledge and skills to lead and manage a school or for the work of a head teacher.... As a result, when I took up the post of the head teacher ... it was a challenge, as I tried to think as to what are my roles and responsibilities. (Nelson, 18/5/12)

And Harry explained:

From my experience, I would say that my current qualification does not provide me well with the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out my role as a head teacher.... I think I still need further knowledge to help me with my roles and responsibilities..... I still need to go on further training. (Harry, 9/5/12)

Timo remarked:

I think my current qualification did not equip me well to carry out my leadership roles and responsibilities. I see myself as not fit to be a head teacher. In the past years, there were very senior teachers who used to work under my leadership, but most of the time I used to seek their advice and they were the ones that normally guide me on what to do. (Timo,3/5/12)

Antonio pointed out:

From my experience, my current qualification [certificate in teaching primary] does not equip me.... I still need to learn....With what I already know... I need to do further studies so that I can be able to gain further knowledge and skill on top of what I already know.... This is very necessary to help me effectively lead my school. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

The concern raised by the head teachers has indicated that teaching experience and being a good classroom does not guaranteed someone to be able to perform the work of a school leader effectively.

4.5.3 Lack of resources

Lack of sufficient resources in schools is the third common challenge faced by the head teachers. Nelson stressed that he had found a lack of resources when he first arrived at his school:

Another challenge that I encounter is about resources.... This was especially when I was first appointed and came in the school....There were not enough teaching and learning resources....There were some few resources and they were all over the place so I had to try and tidy them up... and purchase new ones. (Nelson, 18/5/12)

Timo also commented that resources were a problem in his school because he needed to focus more on the infrastructure of the school:

In terms of resources... in fact ... acquiring of teaching and learning resources is a problem for me this year because currently I am concentrating on building staff houses for the school. (Timo, 3/5/12)

Another head teacher who further highlighted this issue was Harry. He said that as his school was a rural school he had problems with earning enough money to buy the needed resources:

Another major challenge that I experienced in this school is to do with resourcesYou know ... this is a rural school so in terms of money we do not have enough to meet all the resources that are needed Anyway, with the

limited number we have, we can still use them and students can still learn....But ... as I have saidresources is a problem in this school. (Harry, 9/5/12)

4.5.4 Untrained teachers

The fourth issue commonly raised by the head teachers was that of untrained teachers. Having these untrained teachers in schools had created an extra workload for the head teachers, with further challenges.

Antonio reported that because she had untrained teachers in her school she required extra time to provide support for them, thus creating an extra workload:

The other challenge that I face is with my staff. Some of my staff are untrained teachers so every now and then I have to assist them with their teaching and advise them on how they should behave, act and relate to parents and community members..... For me this is a challenge because I need extra time to assist and guide these untrained teachers. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

Timo also encountered this situation with his untrained teachers:

The posting of untrained teachers to my school is also a challenge for me. This is because these people are not trained to teach. They are high school leavers but because there are not enough teachers the government employs them and post them to schools. I spend extra time to try and help these untrained teachers but you know, it's not easy. (Timo, 3/5/12)

This issue of untrained teachers was shared by Harry who stated that his school has more untrained teachers than trained, and that he had to put in extra effort to support them in order for them to perform to his expectations:

In terms of teaching, one of the challenges that I experience is concerned with posting of untrained teachers.... I mean, in my school, there are only two that are trained teachers and the rest are untrained teachers.... This is a challenge for me as the head of the school because the majority of my teachers are untrained so I discovered that their work performance is not satisfactory, or low....This requires more meeting times with them to help them with their teaching so that the children receive quality teaching and learning....This is a real challenge for me. (Harry, 9/5/12)

The lack of qualified teachers is a national issue in Solomon Islands and as a result the government has no option but to recruit untrained teachers to fill the vacant positions, including in schools in Makira Ulawa Province. Nevertheless, the concerns raised by the head teachers regarding having untrained teachers in their schools require closer attention by the authorities responsible for staffing in schools.

4.5.5 Role stereotype

As a female head teacher, Keni encountered a major challenge from the male members of her school community because of her gender. She explained:

The challenges that I face are, firstly, as a female head teacher I found that the school community does not accept a female school leader.... Maybe because the decisions that I make and the things that I do are done by a woman so the men in the community are not in favour of women's decisions and how women do things.... Also I experienced that men see me as I am incapable to perform the work of the head teacher ... because I am a woman.... They consider a male head teacher will perform better than me.... I think the men in the community think of me in this way. (Keni, 4/5/12)

Makira Ulawa Province is a patriarchal society and it is a strongly held view in the communities that leadership should be held by the men. Having females holding leadership positions would therefore be seen by most as culturally inappropriate and, as such, female school leaders expect to experience resistance and lack of support, especially from males in their communities.

4.6 The facilitators' views on the PDP

In this section the findings relating to the facilitators' views on the PDP are elaborated on. Second, the ways cultural issues were addressed during the PDP is revealed by the facilitators. Other themes which were also identified as significant during the interviews are related to the challenges encountered by the facilitators. These challenges are related to three areas and are related to *the PDP itself, the head teachers, and physical challenges*.

4.6.1 The nature of the PDP

The facilitators described the nature of the PDP as school based, open-ended and personal. The PDP was perceived as open-ended in the sense that the facilitators did not go to the head teachers and tell them what to do, instead they provided support and guidance. For instance, the head teachers decided on the areas they wanted to work on and the facilitators guided and supported them. The PDP was seen by the facilitators as school based and individual because it actually took place in the school and the support provided was developed purposefully for the head teacher of each selected school.

David was one of the facilitators of PDP. He was formerly a principal in his country and had been working as a teacher and educational consultant in other Pacific Island countries before coming to Solomon Islands (Makira Ulawa Province) to facilitate the PDP.

David elaborated on the PDP:

The programme was open-ended, school based, individual, personal,...amm.....that might do it. We did not go in the school and say to the head teachers....We going to go through steps 1,2,3,4 5. No, this programme is about you ... where are you at now ...where you think you'd like to be ... and I guess from my point of view where you will be as well.....Reading the relationship including what they were doing, you know,...through the discussions, figuring where they were at.... So it wasn't going into the school and saying This is what I want you to achieve in the next two weeks.... It was laying a foundation... for improving their educational leadership in the school.... I had the task of visiting a selected group of six head teachers in their schools and working with each of them for a fortnight. Development goals were set and a further visit was carried out by me to the six head teachers during October 2011.(David, 21/5/12)

4.6.2 The PDP: A potential approach for supporting head teachers

The facilitators stressed that head teachers in rural schools in Makira Ulawa Province need support. They need someone to visit them at their schools on a regular basis and provide them with professional support and guidance. This is important as most of these teachers did not have appropriate qualifications and

lacked professional support and guidance when they took up their positions. Such school based support is important for positive improvement to take place in schools. They also highlighted that the approaches used in PDP, as reported above, have a lot of potential and were suitable to provide support for head teachers in rural schools.

Chris, one of the facilitators, had worked for six years as an education officer with the Makira Ulawa Education Authority office. He described the PDP as a good method of offering help for head teachers as it brings about positive changes in schools:

[PDP) was a very good type or strategy of providing support for head teachersbecause from what I observe as an education officer in this province, there are positive changes that had taken place with the head teachers that the mentors [facilitators]had worked with. (Chris, 7/5/12)

David further supported Chris's view and reported as follows:

That kind of mentoring, coaching, supporting role, I think is marvellous. Teachers need support and they need someone who can come in and say Hey, how you are going? Where are you at? What help do you want? How can you teach this body of questions, how can you teach this best?.... Someone going out to support schools.... So, local support for teachers, local support for head teachers. (David, 21/5/12)

4.7 Addressing cultural issues

The types of cultural issues that were addressed during PDP were mainly related to the facilitators' conduct, as some of the facilitators were not from Makira Ulawa Province.

Chris revealed this:

During the one week workshop, I was there with other facilitators, so they always approached me to advise them on how to behave, talk, and greet people... and so forth, that would be culturally acceptable during the workshop.(Chris, 7/5/12)

David, on the other hand, observed that cultural issues were not clearly addressed in the classrooms. He explained:

I don't know that I did, in terms of the teaching world, other than how you address teachers in the school.... For example, the women are called madam and so and so.... Take off your shoes when you when into the classroom.... I can't say that... I am not sure that cultural issues are being addressed, in the classroom, anyway... because we say that Pacific Island students learn cooperatively...but there is not much cooperative learning. You sit at your desk and you do what the teacher says.... Now in one school, in fact all the schools that I visited have packets of resources, beautiful resources... sent out by the Ministry of Education resource unit... and there are lots of maths materials, charts, but I found out that they are not being used. The cultural issues of education... I don't know that this is being addressed in schools... No cultural work, art and craft work that is part of the school programme.(David, 21/5/12)

4.8 Challenges experienced by the facilitators during the PDP

The challenges that were experienced by the facilitators occurred in three particular areas. These related to the PDLP itself, the head teachers and physical challenges.

4.8.1 The short term nature of the programme

The facilitators felt that the time period during which the PDP was conducted was not long enough. Because of this, proper monitoring and follow-up visits were not able to be carried by the facilitators to further enhance and develop the capacities of the head teachers.

David explained:

It was a short-term project and had the project been able to be followed up in another month or two,... I believe it would have really developed their roles as school leaders.... So there are whole lots of ideas and what they pick up could have been better develop with further follow-ups....but we only have the one follow-up, which was a mixed success. (David, 21/5/12)

4.8.2 Challenges associated with the head teachers

The facilitators reported that they also encountered challenges with the head teachers. They noted that some of the head teachers lacked the personal commitment to implement their assigned tasks. They also found that the head teachers lacked knowledge and understanding of the concept of professional leadership. The facilitators also said there was a lack of quality teaching in some of the head teachers themselves, which had a negative impact on their own performance as school leaders.

David was one of the key facilitators and he reported the following:

There is a decided reluctance to take a next step.... It appears that some of the head teachers that I worked with are not risk takers. (David, 21/5/12)

The concept of professional leadership is a very new one for Solomon Island head teachers. Even though there are two clear requirements for 'professional leadership' in the head teachers' role description (the Duty Statement) in the Teaching Service Handbook, very few head teachers have any understanding as to what this involves. (David, 12/5/12)

A major obstacle we found is the quality of teaching amongst head teachers themselves and a starting point for many head teachers needs to be to lift the standard of their own teaching and understanding of the teaching process. If someone isn't a good teacher in the first place, how can that person lead others? (David, 21/5/12)

4.8.3 Physical challenges

The other challenges experienced by the facilitators were physical. These include challenges associated with transport, language, food, resources and the environment.

Chris highlighted that in Makira Ulawa Province there is no proper road access to schools, therefore teachers and facilitators have to be transported by Out Motor Boats (OMB). According to Chris, such an exercise is challenging because of rough seas and the high cost of fuel in the province:

One of the challenges is logistics ... in transporting teachers to and from the workshop venue....There is lack of proper roads so head teachers have be transported by Out Motor Boat which was challenging, especially with the weather which was rough during that time.... Also, fuel is very expensive in the province. But overall, the training ran smoothly and the venue was good. (Chris, 7/5/12)

David reported that there were many physical challenges that he encountered while working with head teachers in their schools:

Absolutely lots of challenges.... I did not speak Pidgin... a lot of Pidgin is spoken in the schools....The food... I am not used to the Solomon Islands food....But the people looked after me extremely well... No resources...well, no computers, no electricity, no whatever, so you would draw on everything from in here.....We just had to....For example, when I worked with kids and cut some resources, how do we store them...Unless there is some computer paper there and staplers so that we made some little envelopes for them. (David, 21/5/12)

4.9 The impact of the PDP as experienced and perceived by the head teachers and facilitators

This section elaborates on the findings relating to the impact of the PDP on work performance of the head teachers as experienced and perceived by both the head teachers and facilitators. The head teachers and facilitators reported two common impacts of the PDP. These were improved focus on teaching and learning and improved management and supervision of teachers.

4.9.1 Improved focused on teaching and learning

Antonio revealed that the PDP helped her to plan and lead teaching and learning in her school:

I realise from this training programme that one of my important roles as a head teacher is to plan for teaching and learning, especially on how to improve students' learning.... I used to discuss with my teachers about some of the effective strategies for teaching of students. I learnt these strategies during the professional leadership training that I attended. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

Similarly, Nelson commented that the PDP had assisted him to provide support and regular monitoring of his teachers:

I learn a lot from this PDP.... It helps me to change some of the ideas or how I perceived my roles and responsibilities as a school leader. One example of something that I learnt and is helpful is on how to assist my teachers through regular class visitation and monitoring. (Nelson, 18/5/12)

Harry highlighted this same point:

In my school I must ensure to meet regularly with my teachers to discuss, share and assist each other on ways to improve teaching and learning in the school. (Harry, 9/5/12)

From the facilitators' perspectives the roles and the responsibilities of the head teachers remained the same. However, David reported that the head teachers have changed in the ways in which they implement their roles and responsibilities as a result of participating in the PDP.

David explained:

The head teachers roles and responsibilities haven't change but how they carry them out I hope should have changed.... Before the training head teachers were not thinking of themselves as educational leaders. They were thinking of themselves as managers of the school. I am going to keep the attendance register, I am going to do the retirement of the school grant ... I got to keep the finances in order. It was more about keeping the school going. I got to get the windows repaired or meet with the school community... not as I have to develop the learning plans or programs to improve student's learning and I got to offer leadership or professional leadership to my teachers. With the school based support that we offered the head teachers I believe educational leadership, particularly in the schools that we were attached to, is strengthened, especially in how they carry out their roles, especially in planning and implementing learning activities in their schools. (David, 21/5/12)

4.9.2 Improved supervision and management

The study revealed that another common aspect of the role of the head teachers which they have put more focus on is the management and supervision of teachers. Timo reported that in his school he would meet with his teachers to check their work programmes. He elaborated:

What we used to have in the school is a staff development programme where teachers come together regularly and each one is given the opportunity to share with everyone how they teach certain topics in the syllabus.... In these meetings teachers also provide any help for any teacher that might need help with any topic or subtopic in the syllabus. Also during these meeting I check the teachers workbook or programmes...making sure that they prepare their class lessons according to the syllabus and are up-to-date with their teaching programmes. When I check my teachers' programmes, it helps me when I visit their classes as I could tell whether or not what they teach is related to their programmes and lesson plans. (Timo, 3/5/12)

Harry revealed that he supports his teachers and supervises their work:

Sometimes I actually provide assistance to some of my teachers,... especially for those that I am not satisfied with how they teach.... Also, fortnightly, teachers are required to give me their lesson plans and other activities that they plan for their classes. I do this as one way to ensure that my teachers prepare well for their lessons and are progressing well with their term or year programme. (Harry, 9/5/12)

Nelson also highlighted that he manages his teachers' work and monitors their attendance and work programmes in the school:

I used to visit and monitor my teachers in the past years but I don't think I did it properly as I am doing it now. The facilitator who worked with me in my school really helped me with this. I regularly check their work programmes and lesson plans. I also check my teachers' attendances and make sure they are teaching their classes and performing their roles and allocated responsibilities. (Nelson, 18/5/12)

Antonio made the same point:

If teachers, especially the new ones, need help with their teaching I step in and assist them.... Also, I assist my teachers with any problems or challenges that

they encounter during staff development programmes....This is what I used to do for my teachers to help them, instead of neglecting them when they need help. (Antonio, 11/5/12)

The facilitators also perceived that the teachers had improved in performing their administration and leadership duties. Chris observed that the head teachers were doing well in how they managed and provided support for their teachers:

I would say ... that most of the head teachers who participated in New Zealand funded PDP, especially those selected head teachers where the facilitators worked with them in their schools, they are implementing what they have learnt. For example, the head teacher of Bina Primary School has improved in her administrative and leadership roles.... I observed that she properly controls and monitors her teachers and supports them with their teaching. She plans and implements programmes that help students learn better in her school.... The same thing also happened with the head teacher of Noabu Primary School. (Chris, 7/5/12)

These findings will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5. 1 Introduction

In this study a number of themes emerged that were specific to each participant group and others that were common to both. In this chapter, the importance of the research method for gathering rich data and the significant findings of the study are discussed. The semi-structured interview was the main data generating method for the research fieldwork. The aim of the semi-structured interview was to allow the head teachers and the facilitators to express in their own words their perceptions and experiences of the impact of the NZAid funded PDP. In particular I wished to gain insight into the professional learning experiences of the head teachers on the NZAid funded PDP; the impact of PDP on the responsibilities and roles of the head teachers; the head teachers' views about professional development; and the experiences of both the New Zealand and Solomon Islands facilitators as leaders of the PDP. Thus the interview provided an opportunity for participants to interact with me and express themselves in their own way, resulting in rich and descriptive data (Creswell, 2003; Bell, 1999). One specific advantage of the semi-structured interview is that it is a “flexible tool for data collection” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 349). As a means for social interaction between the interviewer and interviewees (Burns, 2000), the interview method allowed me to interact with each participant in an informal setting and to probe their responses to the initial interview questions for further clarification (Cohen et al., 2007) and information.

Six common themes and associated categories have been identified as being significant in this study and are critically discussed in the next part of this chapter.

5.2 Learning experiences of the head teachers during the PDP

The professional learning experiences of the head teachers became a theme in which three categories were identified: *development of school vision and goals*, *teacher appraisal* and *developing an action plan to improve teaching and learning*.

5.2.1 Development of school vision and goals

The PDP focused on developing each head teacher's capacity to formulate a personal vision for their school. According to Kedian (2011) and Manasse (1986), a personal vision includes the internal aspirations that the leader has for the organisation and acts as the impetus for his or her actions. These authors have also noted that a leader with a clear vision of what he or she wants for his or her school can result in a school's staff developing a clearer sense of purpose and thus achieve higher levels of professional growth and development. Developing a personal vision and goals was one of the learning activities which the head teachers were involved in during the PDP. They were assisted by the facilitators and guided by four overarching questions. As David explained:

With some of the head teachers I worked on how to develop a vision for their school. What is their vision for the school?... And I remembered one of the tasks is for them to think about their school vision ...What the school is existing for? What is your job here? What is your task here? What did you want out of the school? (David, Facilitator, 12/05/12)

For most of the head teachers engaging in the formulation of a personal vision for their school was a new learning experience. They said that in the past they had their schools without any clear direction. Notably the findings indicated that having a personal vision and setting goals offered the head teachers clear direction and guidelines on how to lead, manage and organise various professional activities in the school. As Keni stated, "It was really interesting and helpful for me because I use my school vision and goals to guide my planning and the learning activities in the school" (Keni, head teacher, 4/5/12). This was an important learning experience for the head teachers because as school leaders with responsibility for setting the direction of the school they needed to have clear

ideas and a vision of where they would like their school to be heading (Cornwall, 2003). This required that their school vision could be effectively translated into a form that could be easily understood by teachers, parents, and other members of the school. As Cornwall (2003) has pointed out, if a school's vision is not defined well it usually cannot be clearly articulated by others.

To be an effective school leader, however, head teachers cannot rely only on their personal vision for their school because when a vision is developed solely by the principal without input from other staff and parents it can often be difficult to gain their commitment to its implementation (Lumby, 2005). In part, this is because each member of the school also brings his or her own vision to the school and so will not have the same set of beliefs (Lindstron & Speck, 2004). Thus, according to Leithwood, Janti, and Steinbach (1999), a leader's vision needs to be shared and agreed to by those in the organisation regardless of whether the vision is initiated by the leader alone or developed collaboratively.

Interestingly, and despite the head teachers' and facilitators' positive comments about vision and goals, except for one participant, the head teachers were unable to give examples of their actual vision statement and goals, even though probe questions were asked during the interviews. The vision of the one exceptional head teacher had been written on a board and placed in front of the school. This head teacher uses it as a guide for her leadership of the school. The action of this head teacher demonstrates that she was able to put into action what she had learned from the PDP and was a manifestation of how PD opportunities such as the PDP can further develop the knowledge of head teachers in Makira Ulawa Province.

A possible reason why most of the head teachers were not able to give exact examples of their school vision is that while they learned how to develop a school vision during their learning exercise in the PDP they had yet to make time to formulate one for their school. It does seem that the information shared in the interviews was based on their learning experience during the PDP but the actual implementation was more challenging than expected.

Nevertheless, as the literature has claimed, having a clearly articulated personal vision or purpose is vital and central to successful and effective leadership (Bush & Glover, 2003; Creighton, 1999; Hoppe, 2003; Robinson, 2007). There does appear to be a need for ongoing professional development to support head teachers in developing a personal vision for their schools.

A point worth noting is that the head teachers did not comment on involving teachers and parents in the process of formulating their school visions and goals. This could be because the training focused mainly on developing head teachers' personal vision and goals, and with personal vision the focus is mostly with the ideas of the founder or the leader (Cornwall, 2003), therefore less emphasis may have been placed on involving others. Even so, Leithwood, Janti and Steinbach (1999) have argued that whether a vision is developed individually by the school leader or collaboratively with other teachers, it is important that others are consulted and their viewpoints and agreement sought.

5.2.2 Teacher appraisal

The study shows that teacher appraisal was also a focus of the PDP, with the head teachers learning the necessary knowledge and skills for appraisal by working with the facilitators. After their appraisal learning exercise with the facilitators the head teachers held meetings with their teachers, observed their classroom teaching and other aspects of their work and gave them feedback and feed forward for improvement. This was reflective of a formative appraisal process where the purpose is to identify teachers' strengths, weaknesses, needs, interests, and to review and improve work performance (Bell & Rhodes, 1996; Wragg, Wikeley, Wragg, & Haynes, 1996; Bartlett, 2000). The method of appraisal adopted in the PDP could also be seen as what Wragg (1987) and Downs (1992) have termed superior-subordinate appraisal, which requires the head teacher to be responsible for appraising his or her teachers and assumes that appraisal can only work from the top down. This was seen as an important learning experience by the head teachers participating in the PDP for initiating and conducting staff appraisal in their schools (Bell & Rhodes, 1996, p. 94) to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out the appraisal process effectively.

While the focus of the PDP was more specifically teacher appraisal, it was also necessary for the head teachers to consider how their performance as school leaders might be appraised. In Solomon Islands there is a real need for action to be taken in relation to the appraisal of head teachers, given the limited nature of any significant feedback on their performance as head teachers by education authorities or the Ministry of Education (Pedersen & Wasuka, 2010).

This focus on the appraisal of head teachers is warranted because of the prevailing view that the effectiveness of teachers' performance in schools depends on how effectively head teachers carry out their roles (Cardno & Howse, 2004). Additionally, Bell and Rhodes (1996) have noted that appraisal of head teachers' performance is essential because not only are they responsible for the school, they are accountable to parents and school authorities. Head teachers' appraisal therefore needs to consider both how they manage and lead their schools, and their relations with school authorities, parents, and the community (Poster & Poster, 1991).

This study has identified that the head teachers were not appraised or involved in any learning exercise that allowed for their work performance to be appraised. A possible reason for this could be the fact that the PDP was concerned mainly with supporting the head teachers in developing the capacity to appraise their teachers. Furthermore, the duration of the PDP was short and did not continue afterwards, meaning that the facilitators were unable to further assist the head teachers.

5.2.3 Developing an action plan to improve teaching and learning

Another focus of the PDP was to supporting the head teachers to develop an action plan for their schools. An action plan is intended to be part of a school's overall plan (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991). It is usually a written document which clearly and briefly outlines the actions to be employed to achieve particular goals and is used by teachers as a working document (Glanz, 2006). In the PDP developing an action plan required the head teachers to identify a particular aspect related to instruction in their schools that needed improvement. They then

produced their action plans by describing the particular aspect they would like to improve and the approaches that they would use to achieve their goals.

Most of the head teachers indicated that they gained new knowledge and skills after engaging in the exercise of formulating an action plan for their school and claimed that they were now confident to assist their teachers in planning for improvement to their teaching, reflecting Fried and Phillip's (2001) view that professional development should result in the improvement of practice.

The study further disclosed that the PDP aided the head teachers in developing their understanding that as school leaders they have overall responsibility for planning to improve teaching and learning in their schools. As Harry explained, "This training has helped me to see that planning to improve student learning is an important part of my role and responsibility as head teacher" (Harry, head teacher, 9/5/12). Thus having the knowledge and skills to develop an action plan proved important as it helped the head teachers to identify strategies and approaches to improve teachers' teaching and students' achievement (Glanz, 2006). Clearly these head teachers needed to understand that leading the instructional planning through the development of a sound action plan for their schools would result in an improved focus on teaching and learning (Steward, 2000).

While the PDP supported the head teachers in developing basic knowledge and skills in designing of action plans it does appear that the programme was more focussed on planning for teaching and learning. Perhaps it was also necessary and important for each head teacher to develop the capacity to design a more comprehensive strategic plan for their school. This could have been an important learning exercise because a strategic plan takes into account a school's values, mission and vision, and sets the strategic direction from which the whole school will function and move forward (Davis, 2003; Davies & Davies, 2006). School leaders in Solomon Islands therefore need to have access to ongoing professional development so that their knowledge and skills in school planning can be further developed.

5.3 Positive impact of the PDP on head teachers' performance

The findings have revealed that the PDP had a positive impact on the work performance of the head teachers. The particular areas in which both the head teachers and facilitators considered the head teachers had improved include: *developing understanding of role and responsibilities, improved focus on teaching and learning, improved supervision and management, and cooperation within the school.*

5.3.1 Developed understanding of role and responsibilities

Developing a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities had a positive impact on the head teachers. Most of the head teachers in the study reported that their participation in the PDP helped broaden their understanding of their roles and responsibilities by learning that one of their prime roles and responsibilities as school leaders is to provide professional support and guidance for teachers. Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, and Fung (2007) have reported that effective leaders actively support the professional learning of their staff, provide them with opportunities to learn, and have access to relevant expertise. Having this understanding has been regarded as an aspect of their work in which the head teachers changed. In the years prior to their participation in the PDP, they viewed themselves as school managers and focused more on the operational matters of the school. As David commented, "Before the training the head teachers were not thinking of themselves as educational leaders. They were thinking of themselves as managers of the school"(David, facilitator, 21/5/12). David's point is illustrated in Day, Leithwood, Harris, Hopkins and Sammons' (2006) view that management is more concerned with stability and maintaining order and consistency in organisations while leadership is more concerned with the improvement of an organisation, and tends to be more formative and proactive. Hence a better understanding of the difference between these concepts is essential for school leaders. These concepts can guide them in implementing their roles and responsibilities effectively in schools.

Clearly the head teachers started out by considering themselves to be school managers and in their daily practice predominantly performed managerial duties. Additionally, they lacked qualifications in educational leadership, knowledge and skills. Sisiolo (2010) and Malasa (2007) for instance, found that in Solomon Islands most school leaders were not adequately prepared for the role and responsibilities of the school leader and there was a lack of on-going professional development to support them.

As Lindstrom and Speck (2004) have reported, ongoing professional development is essential for individual, team, and school growth in leadership. Professional development of school leaders such as those participating in the PDP is necessary for head teachers in Makira Ulawa province and Solomon Islands as a whole.

5.3.2 Improved focus on teaching and learning

An improved focus on teaching and learning was another positive effect of the PDP on the work performance of the head teachers. This was revealed by both the head teachers and the facilitators. The study found that the head teachers improved the attention they paid to teaching and learning and that they were spending more time in planning and leading the teaching and learning programmes in their schools. As Harry highlighted, “I think the training [PDP] had helped me to see that as a head teacher I must not only concentrate in administering and managing the operational matters of the school but also lead teaching and learning in the school” (Harry, head teacher, 9/5/12). The attention of head teachers to teaching and learning has long been considered an area for needing improvement in Solomon Islands. Due to the more common practice of head teachers mostly concentrating on performing administration and management duties (Rugebatu, 2008; Sanga & Houma, 2004;), little emphasis is placed on leading teaching and learning in schools. As mentioned earlier this appears, in part, to be due to the head teachers’ lack of understanding of educational leadership. Daresh (2004) has highlighted that one advantage of school based professional development for school leaders is that it provides an avenue for their assumptions and roles regarding the relationship between school administration and leadership.

The findings have indicated that the head teachers who participated in the PDP improved their instructional practice. For instance, they paid more attention to improving the instructional programmes (teaching and learning programmes) of their schools and providing support for their teachers. This reflects the view that school leaders as instructional leaders focus more on teaching and learning programmes in their schools (Huber, 2004) and become involved in supporting teachers with their work (Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Hallinger, Bickman & Davis, 1996; Leitner, 1994; Hallinger, 2005).

Lambert (2002) has argued, however, that the principal alone cannot implement the roles associated with instructional leadership. He or she needs active participation from other staff members to carry out these roles effectively. The principal may, for example, not feel welcome in classrooms because traditionally classrooms have been seen as the private domain of the teacher (Hallinger, 2005). Furthermore many principals have less expertise in some subject areas than the teachers they are expected to supervise (Barth, 1980). Nevertheless, as Jackson (2000) and Fullan (2002) point out, school improvement is a journey and some schools, especially those at risk and those in developing countries, may require a more forceful or top-down approach. Instructional leaders can then set clear, time-based, academically focussed goals in order to get the school moving in the desired direction.

5.3.3 Improved supervision and management

The findings of the study show that one focus of the PDP was to assist the head teachers to develop knowledge of and skills for supervision to assist them with their work. Supervision has been referred to by Nolan and Hoover (2011) as an organisational function and process carried out by individuals who have different roles within the education system, including school leaders. Therefore in order to effectively implement a range of supervisory tasks, school leaders need to acquire and apply appropriate knowledge, interpersonal and technical skills (Glickman, Gordon, & Rose-Gordon, 2007).

The head teachers felt they had improved the quality of their supervision as a result of their participation in the PDP. To illustrate, the findings show that in carrying out their supervisory tasks the head teachers were now holding regular meetings with teachers in which the teachers were being given opportunities to share and discuss their teaching approaches and propose ways for improvement. It appears that the meetings also aimed to provide opportunities for teachers to learn from each other. Such an approach to supervision is evident in Nolan and Hoover's (2011) suggestion that "supervision is a professional community-building activity that recognizes that teachers are motivated by internal drives such as desire to improve their own professional competence and a desire to maximize student learning" (p. 8).

The study also demonstrates that the head teachers had provided support and monitored the instructional programmes of their teachers. This illustrates the task of the head teachers as instructional leaders who provide direct contact with individual teachers and provide them with on-going assistance with their teaching (Glickman, Gordon and Rose-Gordon, 2007). Ofsted (2003) has noted that monitoring classrooms is now an accepted part of leadership as it has been found that there is better teaching in schools which leaders effectively implement monitoring compared with schools where monitoring is poor and irregular (as cited in Southworth, 2011).

An alternative explanation as to why the head teachers considered the above as an improvement in their work is because in Makira Ulawa Province school leaders pay more attention to administration and management of other areas such as resources, buildings, and finance and place less emphasis on supervising teachers and learning activities in the school (Hendry, Chief Education Officer, personal conversation, 8/5/12). Similarly, Rugebatu (2008) and Malasa (2007) have found that in Solomon Islands school leaders are focused more on administration and managerial tasks.

The study also found that the head teachers had improved their ability to manage and monitor teachers' attendance by developing attendance registers which teachers are required to sign when they arrive at school and sign out when they

leave. This is done to ensure that teachers attend school and teach their classes. As Timo noted, “I have a teachers’ daily attendance record book in my office. Teachers are required to sign it when they arrived at school and sign out when they leave the school. These systems are used to monitor teachers’ and students’ attendance” (Timo, head teacher, 3/5/12).

Managing and keeping a proper record of teachers’ attendance was just one approach the head teachers had adopted to try to improve the recording and reporting of teacher attendance and absences. Poor attendance is an issue in most primary schools in Solomon Islands (Tapidaka, Oso, Arilasi, & Robinson, 2011), hence the monitoring and keeping proper record of teacher attendance and associated instances of absenteeism was regarded by the head teachers as area of improvement in their work.

5.4 Cooperation

As stated in the findings cooperation became a theme under which two categories emerged: *team work* and *improved relationships with parents and school community*.

5.4.1 Team work

Working with teachers in a team was considered by the head teachers as an area of improved cooperation.

The PDP referred to team work as teachers working together with a mutual understanding and guided by a common goal: to provide effective teaching and learning for the students. Interestingly the head teachers interpreted the term *team work* depending on the needs of their schools. For example, most considered working together with teachers as an area that needed improvement in their schools and so they had involved teachers in decision making, planning and delegating responsibilities. As the head teacher of Kirio Primary School commented: “I share or delegate various responsibilities in the school for my teachers and we plan and make decision together” (Keni, head teacher, 04/5/12).

The practice adopted by Keni was associated with the notion of democratic leadership in which leaders actively promote participation in decision making. It also reflects the view that in a team, members are valued for their participation and skills and are allocated roles according to their abilities (Ridden & De Nobile, 2012). Team work involves a number of people who combine their skills and use them to work towards achieving a common goal for which they hold themselves mutually responsible (Ridden & De Nobile, 2012); an effective school leader needs to know how to harness the strengths of the teachers in their school.

Nevertheless, and despite their apparent commitment to developing team work in their schools, many head teachers in Solomon Islands still uphold the principles of hierarchical leadership practice (Malasa, 2007). With this leadership style trust is low, information is shared on a limited basis and participation is controlled (Gardiner, 2006). It is therefore probable that the head teachers in this study had been practising a hierarchical leadership style in their schools and so placed less emphasis on the involvement of teachers in various areas of the school, as discussed above. Rosengarten (1999) argues that in organisations such as schools the school leader needs to encourage teachers to participate in leadership and decision making, and gather support and commitment from the people they lead (Miller, 2002; Harris & Chapman, 2002). This will require a head teacher to have the capacity and skills to motivate and encourage teachers to work together (Rosengarten, 1999).

Somewhat interestingly, the facilitators did not mention team work as an area in which the head teachers had improved. It was possible the facilitators did not mention team work as an area of improvement as they spent only a short period of time with the head teachers in their schools. “This [PDP] was a two month project and one short follow-up” (David, facilitator, 21/5/12). Because of this the facilitators would not necessarily be aware of some of the other areas that the head teachers had been working on to improve their work performance.

5.4.2 Improved relationships with parents and school community

Improved relationships with parents and the wider school community were reported by the head teachers as an area in which they felt they had improved as a result of their involvement in the PDP. The findings revealed that the head teachers regularly held meetings to increase awareness of the parents about areas relating to the importance of parental support for schools. It was also indicated that the head teachers regularly invited and encouraged parents to come to school to seek information or answers for any query that they have. “I also invite [parents] to come to school if they want any information or are concerned about any issues” (Harry, head teacher, 9/5/12). It appears that the head teachers were using such approaches in attempts to address the issues of limited parental participation in their schools, which had been identified in the findings as a significant challenge. Similarly Sisiolo (2010) found that in Solomon Islands parents in some schools would withdraw their support because they lacked proper and clear information about the management of school. Epstein (1990) also noted that minimal parental involvement in schools is a problem in many countries around the world, with the majority of parents having little contact with the schools their children attend. Clearly strong parental involvement in their children’s school is important, because it brings benefits for students, parents and the school (Hornby, 2000). As Olender, Elias, and Mastroleo (2010) discovered, when parents are effectively involved in their children’s education, the children attend school regularly, adapt well to school, their academic achievement improves, they develop better social skills, adapt well to school, show improved behaviour, and their academic motivation increases. Greater parental involvement has also been shown to lead to better school programmes (Henson, 2012), build higher levels of trust between parents and teachers in the school, and increase positive parental attitudes toward teachers and the school (Olender, Elias, & Mastroleo, 2010). Furthermore, Henderson and Mapp (2002) found that regardless of family income or background students whose parents are involved in their schooling are more likely to do well. These benefits form a strong basis for head teachers in Solomon Islands to develop and improve their schools’ relationship with parents and the wider school community.

In support of the positive efforts of the head teachers endeavours to develop strong relationships with parents, the PDP emphasised and was concerned with head teachers improving the ways parents received information and developed their awareness of school activities as an approach to improve parental participation in the school. This was based on the view that all parents regardless of their background care about the education of their children and if they are aware of what the school expects of them they will improve their participation (Epstein, 1990). A point worth noting is that to increase parents' awareness the head teachers needed to develop specific knowledge of strategies and techniques to work effectively with parents. As Hornby (2000) has noted, developing the interpersonal skills, attitudes and knowledge needed for working effectively with parents is essential for all school leaders and teachers.

As a result of their participation in the PDP the head teachers consider that their efforts to develop a greater awareness of school activities and the provision of other information for parents had led to improvement in parents' involvement with the school.

5.5 Head teachers' views on professional development

Professional development (PD) was perceived by the head teachers as being something that happened when they or their teachers participated in specifically designed in-service training such as workshops, short courses, and university based training programmes and meetings, conducted by outside experts. They saw PD as providing new knowledge and skills to improve their work performance. This view is supported by both Robertson (2005) and Villegas-Reimers (2003) in that they consider that PD includes the person's formal experiences such as attending or participating in PD programmes like in-service training and workshops/seminars.

The head teachers may perceive PD in this way because in Solomon Islands the most common form of PD provided for head teachers is a workshop format. These workshops are mainly provided by the Ministry of Education and are designed to train head teachers to acquire the knowledge and skills to run their schools, and to

deliver information to them (MEHRD, 2008). Workshops are most commonly used in Solomon Islands as they are the most appropriate and practical approach to PD that the Ministry of Education can afford, taking into account the context and situation in the country. For instance, Solomon Islands lacks educational expertise, resources, and efficient transport and communication systems (Malasa, 2007). It is therefore not easy for the Ministry of Education to introduce other strategies for the PD of school leaders, such as mentoring and coaching. Having experienced workshops as the only method of PD would contribute to the head teachers' somewhat narrow perceptions of PD.

The findings also indicate that the way the head teachers viewed PD affected how they provided for and viewed PD at the school level. For example, the head teachers provided staff development programmes through meetings which they themselves usually led. Timo explained, "What we used to have in the school is a staff development programme where teachers come together regularly and each one is given the opportunity to share with everyone how they teach certain topics in the syllabus" (Timo, head teacher, 3/5/12). This reflects the view that PD can nurture collaboration among teachers, other staff and the principals (Lindstrom & Speck, 2004); however, the approach as described in Timo's school does have its limitations. While the head teachers also carry out other activities such as teacher appraisal they considered such activities to be unrelated to teachers' PD. It became evident that the head teachers needed a clearer and wider understanding of the concept of PD and the various PD approaches that could be adopted.

5.6 The facilitators' views of the PDP

The approach used in PDP which involved school-based in-service training workshops was considered by the facilitators as a sound approach for supporting head teachers in rural schools in Makira Ulawa Province. The PDP was school-based in the sense that the facilitators went to individual schools to provide support and guidance for the head teachers.

It seems that the PDP was considered a sound strategy because most primary schools in the province are located in very remote areas and it was therefore

cheaper for facilitators to be attached to the school and work with head teachers instead of transporting all head teachers to attend the programme (PDP) in a common venue. As Chris noted, “One of the challenges is logistics ... in transporting teachers to and from the workshop venue” (Chris, facilitator, 7/5/12). Additionally, the PDP was considered a useful approach because the head teachers in rural schools in Makira Ulawa Province needed support and with such an approach they could receive feedback on their performance directly from the facilitators. This notion has been highlighted by O’Mahony and Barnett (2008), in their assertion that experienced principals also have learning needs and that professional development programmes such as those that offer one-on-one support can help guide them in developing and enhancing their professional effectiveness through the use of feedback.

As with the PDP the facilitators provided feedback on the work performance of the head teachers while they were supporting them at their schools. However, a point worth noting is that in their case the facilitators were not able to continue providing feedback after they left the schools. It would appear that the school-based workshop approach as adopted in PDP needs to be continuous and facilitators need to carry out follow-up visits. This would allow facilitators to ensure that head teachers put into action what they had learnt and give them feedback. Villegas-Reimer (2003) has noted that a common weakness of in-service workshops is the lack of follow-up visits by facilitators to monitor the implementation of learning from the workshops. As a result participants fail to put into practice what they have learnt. Nevertheless, workshops as a professional development approach can be successful especially when supported by additional support, follow-up visits and other types of PD opportunities (Boris-Schacter & Langer, 2006; Villegas-Reimer, 2003; Zeegers, 1995).

Furthermore, it appears that the PDP was viewed as having the potential for supporting head teachers because it allowed the facilitators to experience the real situation in each school. This means that the facilitators could support and guide each head teacher according to their local school needs. In that way what the head teachers learned directly related to and was relevant to their daily work and their specific school situations. Robertson (2005) has argued that it is important for

leaders to see the direct relevance of professional development to their job and daily practice because PD activities that are not relevant or directed related to the reality of the work of school leaders serve no purpose.

The findings indicate that school-based workshops such as those offered by the PDP have potential and could be adopted to provide PD for school leaders in third world countries like Solomon Islands. Perhaps what is most important for school-based workshops to be more successful is that they be conducted for an appropriate length of time, their content is job related and they enable participants to be involved in active learning (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000). In other words, PD approaches such as the PDP could be tailored to suit the local educational context of a particular country, such as the Solomon Islands.

5.7 The challenges experienced by the facilitators and head teachers

Both the facilitators and the head teachers encountered challenges during the PDP. The most common challenges reported included: *the short term nature of the PDP; lack of resources; language and food; lack of appropriate qualification; and limited community support.*

5.7.1 Short term nature of the PDP

The two groups of participants in the study made reference to the short term nature of PDP as a challenge they encountered. It was noted that the training was conducted in each school for only a two week period followed by a short follow-up visit. Both the head teachers and facilitators claimed that they were not able to cover much in this short length of time. As Nelson stated, “Two weeks for me is not enough...There needs to be regular follow up visits so that the facilitators can continue see how I am performing and give me feedbacks and feed forwards” (Nelson, head teacher, 18/5/12). David concurred, “It was a short term project and had the project been able to have other follow-up in another month or two ... and other follow-up in another month or two,... I believe it would have really developed their roles as school leaders” (David, facilitator, 21/5/12). Cardno and Howse (2004) have pointed out that one of the criticisms of in-service workshops

is that the nature of such PD is ad hoc and not formalised. It became clear that the main reason for conducting the PDP over such a short period of time was because it was funded by NZAid, meaning that it had to operate within its allocated budget. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Makira Ulawa Province lack the funds and qualified people to continue running an on-going PD programme. This finding reinforces those of Bush and Oduro (2006), who reported that in Ghana in-service workshops for head teachers provided by international agencies such as World Bank projects usually stop once the project is completed because the government cannot afford to sustain them. Nevertheless, what can be drawn from this study is that there is a great need for head teachers in Makira Ulawa Province to be supported with continued professional development workshops and other types of on-the-job support. Most importantly such support needs to be ongoing, consistent, of high quality and formalised.

5.7.2 Lack of resources

A lack of resources was another challenge experienced by the facilitators and the head teachers. They revealed that the rural primary schools in which the PDP was conducted have no access to electricity, computer, telephone and internet, and finance for other basic teaching and learning resources. As David explained:

No resources....Well....no computers, no electricity, ... no whatever so you could...We just had to...and for example, when I worked with kids and cut some resources, how do we store them Unless there is some computer paper there and staplers so that we made some little envelopes for them.
(David, facilitator, 21/5/12)

This finding is similar to those reported by Malasa (2007) and Sikua (2002) regarding the situation of Community High Schools in Solomon Islands. A lack of financial resources has resulted in most primary schools having to do without basic items such as furniture and educational equipment. While a lack of resources may not link directly to the effectiveness of the PDP it had an impact on how the facilitators were able carry out their work. For instance, it was noted in the findings that most of the facilitators were from overseas and they were used to using computers, having internet access and other more basic resources in their place of work. Having to work without such resources during the PDP was a

challenge for the facilitators and from their perspective affected the effectiveness of the training. What this strongly implies is that the availability of basic resources is an important factor that must be considered when developing and conducting PD in rural primary schools in Solomon Islands.

5.7.3 Language and food

Language and food were reported as challenges. These were highlighted particularly by one of the overseas facilitators. The overseas facilitators did not speak or understand Pidgin, which is the common language used in schools. Although the head teachers understood the English language, it was revealed that they were not able to speak it fluently and confidently and this had caused ineffective discussions and collaborations between the head teachers and the overseas facilitators. Lindstrom and Speck (2004) have emphasised that one important component of quality PD is collaboration and that language plays an important role in enhancing collaboration. This requires both the facilitators and head teachers to be able to use a common language so that they can talk and discuss freely without any hindrance or barriers.

The overseas facilitators, although they were well cared for in schools, were not used to eating local Solomon Islands' food and this affected them physically. These findings suggested that while it is a good idea to involve overseas facilitators (because of their expertise and experience) in school-based PD for school leaders in Solomon Islands, the issues of language and food as stated above need to be taken into account when engaging overseas facilitators. This is necessary for the effectiveness of such PD programmes. An alternative approach to address this situation would be to use local facilitators. However, this raises another issues which is the importance of these local facilitators being well prepared and having appropriate experience and qualifications.

5.7.4 Lack of appropriate qualification

The study revealed that most of the head teachers lacked appropriate qualifications in educational leadership. They considered this a challenge because

they lacked the relevant knowledge and skills to lead their schools (West-Burnham, 2009). They needed appropriate PD and access to other forms of school-based support in order to perform their work effectively (Bush, 1998). Although the head teachers had obtained their certificates in teaching, they argued that their qualifications had not prepared them for the role of the school leader. As Nelson explained:

My certificate of teaching qualification only prepared me for teaching in the Classroom. I mean this qualification [certificate in teaching] provides me with very little knowledge and skills to lead and manage a school or for the work of a head teacher. (Nelson, head teacher, 18/5/12)

The study's findings suggest that most head teachers in primary schools in Makira Ulawa Province have been selected from the classroom and do not have any formal leadership qualifications or preparation before taking up their head teacher's post. This is consistent with the findings of Lingam (2011) and Malasa (2007), who reported that secondary school principals and primary school head teachers in Solomon Islands were drawn from the classroom and lacked formal preparation. The findings also emphasise the view expressed by Bush (2008) that school leaders in most developing countries do not obtain any specific management and leadership training prior to their appointment because such programmes are either inadequate or unavailable. This study, however, has discovered that despite a lack of formal preparation the head teachers had each used their initiative and resorted to seeking advice, observing other head teachers, and relying on their past experiences as a means of assisting them to manage and lead their schools. This supports what Sisiolo (2010) has reported, that for the most part school leaders in Solomon Islands perform their roles and responsibilities on a basis of "trial and error".

5.7.5 Limited community support

In Solomon Islands it is a Ministry of Education requirement that school communities be responsible for the development and maintenance of school buildings and school grounds (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2010). This means that parents and community members need to

raise funds and undertake certain works in the school. This study shows that most head teachers are faced with the challenges of limited community support. According to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (2008), getting parents and members of the school community to be involved in their school is a constant challenge for the majority of school leaders in Solomon Islands.

While the above was not necessarily a PD issue, according to the head teachers it was of great concern as they claimed it affected the physical development and maintenance of school buildings and grounds. Although parents and community members are encouraged to be involved in the physical work programmes of the school there are certain factors that hinder their ability to fully participate in such activities. One of these factors, according to the study, is the distance of some of these communities from the school. Most often it was these remote communities that would typically be reluctant to support their school. Nelson explained:

Some community members and parents do not participate well in school activities and works that required them to participateTheir participation,... as I had experienced, is poor and weakThis is especially for far away parents.... For other community members, I have to really stand behind them before they participate well. (Nelson, head teacher, 18/5/12)

In Makira Ulawa Province many small villages are scattered and remote, so that parents and community members may live far away from where schools are built. The lack of adequate roading and transport makes access to schools difficult, especially for such isolated communities. These factors certainly seem to contribute to the limited support they give their children's schools.

These findings do, however, contradict Sisiolo's (2010) discovery that in Choiseul Province parents and school communities are active in their support of schools despite the perceived barriers of transport and roading. It would seem that some parents and communities in the country are active in supporting their schools. There could well be other reasons not identified in this study affecting community involvement in the Makira Ulawa schools.

This chapter has identified the impact that participation in the PDP was perceived to have had on the understandings head teachers have of their roles and responsibilities, and on their effectiveness as school leaders. The following chapter presents a summary of the significant findings of the study and makes some recommendations on the basis of those findings.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This study explored the impact a New Zealand Aid Professional Development programme had on developing the understandings of primary school head teachers in Makira Ulawa province, Solomon Islands about their responsibilities and roles. It also explored whether their effectiveness as school leaders increased. Professional development has been identified as critical for the enhancement and improvement of the work of school leaders, however this study found that most primary school head teachers in Solomon Islands are not prepared for leadership and have limited access to professional development programmes or other opportunities.

The study also showed that head teachers can only carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively if they are well prepared for leadership. In particular this requires their participation in ongoing professional development which is geared towards improving their knowledge and understanding of educational leadership. It became clear during the study that having access to appropriate and essential knowledge, and an understanding of educational leadership practice and theory has the potential to greatly enhance the work of current and future head teachers in MUP. Despite this knowledge limited studies have been carried out about the impact of PD for head teachers in MUP and Solomon Islands as a whole.

Although the nature and the size of the study was somewhat but necessarily narrow in its focus, it has provided important insights into the impact PD can have on the effectiveness of head teachers in Solomon Islands. In spite of the limitations associated with this study (small sample size of five primary schools and seven participants; rural primary schools only in Makira Ulawa province), I believe that these findings should be taken into account in order to guide similar

and perhaps larger studies in this area in the future. Hence, the study may not represent the views and experiences of all of the head teachers who participated in the PDP even though they are serving in primary schools situated in and around Kirakira, the capital town of MUP.

6.2 Significant findings

This study has highlighted a number of key areas that are considered significant for the professional development of head teachers in MUP and possibly Solomon Islands as a whole. The findings show that most head teachers appreciated and valued the knowledge and skills they gained during their participation in the PDP. They regarded the PDP as an opportunity that opened their eyes to a number of issues and ideas, and as a necessary support for school leaders. Antonio encapsulated this in his comment, “I think this type of programme is very important for us head teachers especially for me where I lack the knowledge and skills to lead a school” (Head teacher interview, 11/5/ 2012). It was also indicated that most of head teachers were selected for their roles from the classroom, thus they lacked the essential knowledge and skills to lead their schools effectively.

The findings have further indicated that professional development for head teachers like that as provided by the PDP needs to be continuous and more specifically, a career-long developmental process. This is necessary to ensure that head teachers are able to implement, sustain, and enhance their learning, as well as address the various changes that occur with the passage of time such as acquiring and developing new knowledge and skills. As Rugebatu (2008) and Malasa (2007) have pointed out there is an urgent need for school leaders in Solomon Islands to be provided with ongoing professional development to improve and enrich their leadership capacity.

While cost and a lack of well qualified and experienced personnel are the most obvious reasons for the limited provision of ongoing PD for head teachers, it needs to be argued that these factors should not be used as barriers to undermine any kind of commitment to head teachers’ PD. Notably Chandra (2004) and Bacchus (2000) have both emphasised that resources, facilities, and curriculum - no matter how good they are - will not achieve the desired outcomes unless school

leaders and those working at different levels of the education system are more than competent at their jobs. This particularly applies to leaders at the school level as these are the places where educational policies and plans are put into action.

Having said all of this, Solomon Islands as a developing nation does value and acknowledge the importance of providing PD for its school leaders. As such the Ministry of Education has offered professional support to school leaders in more recent years through different kinds of PD activities.

A further finding to emerge from this study which I believe is significant is the potential of school-based PD (like the PDP). This is certainly a more appropriate approach for Solomon Islands where the majority of primary schools are located in rural areas. Perhaps this is what needed for PD programmes to be more successful especially if they can be tailored to suit the local educational setting. A school based programme would need to be conducted for an appropriate and extended period of time, its content related to the experience and roles of the participants and allow them to be involved in learning that is active and reflective (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Robertson, 2005).

The study has also highlighted the importance of using local Solomon Islands personnel to facilitate PD programmes. This is necessary so that issues such as language and food which the overseas facilitators encountered as challenges, do not arise. It was clear in the study that these did become barriers in the PDP which impacted on the effectiveness of the programme. The involvement of local personnel is also necessary for a programme's sustainability, however that does raise a further issue as it was identified that local personnel can not necessarily carry out PD work effectively due to not having appropriate qualifications or experience.

It has been affirmed in this study that ongoing PD programmes and support should be available for all head teachers to develop, sustain and enrich their continuous professional learning and growth. It would seem that the key to this may be to implement school-based PD programmes that offer ongoing support and guidance which is relevant to each head teacher's work and school context.

6.3 Recommendations

A number of important implications for the PD of school leaders in MUP, hence Solomon Islands have arisen from this study. Below I make four recommendations regarding the provision of PD support and preparation for current and future school leaders in Solomon Islands.

First, national guidelines for the PD of school leaders in Solomon Islands could be developed by the Ministry of Education. Subsequently, provincial, church and private education authorities could develop policies regarding the professional development of school leaders by adopting the national PD school leaders' guide lines.

In order to support such a policy initiative some sort of action would need to be undertaken. Hence my second recommendation is focused on the need for officers in the Ministry of Education and other education authorities to undertake visits to countries which already have comprehensive PD programmes for their school leaders. Such a group would then be in a strong position to assist and advise in the development of relevant programmes for Solomon Islands' context.

Third, an additional division could be established among the education authorities. It would need to be staffed with officers who have relevant qualifications and experience. Their overall role and function would be to provide ongoing professional support and guidance for head teachers within the authority. These officers could not only provide PD suited to each head teacher's local context but make regular visits to each head teacher.

A final recommendation and a critical one, is to do with the need for the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development and the education authorities to work together to develop proposals seeking financial support from aid donors and other development partners. This funding would be essential for sustaining and growing PD programmes.

Having been an education officer who has worked closely with head teachers in Makira Ulawa province and as a result of this study, I believe there is an urgent need for head teachers to be provided with PD programmes to support them in their work. Additionally, my observations in Makira Ulawa province have led me to wonder whether head teachers in other provinces and those in church owned schools are also in need of PD programmes. I am hopeful that the findings of this research will in time, assist and guide the Provincial Education Authorities, Church Education Authorities and the Ministry of Education to formulate policies and develop appropriate and effective PD programmes for school leaders. It is possible that this research may also be useful to New Zealand Aid in its evaluation of how effectively its funds are in supporting school leaders and therefore in improving educational outcomes in Solomon Islands.

I consider that it is timely for Solomon Islands education authorities to consider a more robust PD programme for school leaders. It is my hope that in the near future a national PD programme which includes induction and continuous professional support for all school leaders - both current and future – will be developed in Solomon Islands.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Information letter to the Permanent Secretary MEHRD

4/42 York Street
Hillcrest
Hamilton 3216
New Zealand
20th February 2012

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD)
P. O. Box G28
Honiara
Solomon Islands.

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS
IN SOLOMON ISLANDS**

Dear Mr Fred Rohorua,

I am a student at the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand. I am currently working on my thesis for the Master in Educational Leadership qualification, which involves carrying out research in Solomon Islands.

The title of my research project is, “The impact of a professional development programme on the effectiveness of school leaders in Solomon Islands”. It is intended that the participants in my study will be the head teachers who attended this programme and its facilitators. As the government agency responsible for granting research permits, I am seeking your approval for me to conduct this study which will require me to visit and collect data from selected primary schools in Solomon Islands. According to my plan, I would like to visit 6-8 schools and the Education Division Office in Makira Ulawa Province. My investigation is scheduled to be conducted in April/May 2012. I will await your response before contacting the Provincial Secretary and CEO of Makira Ulawa Province.

I would be grateful if you would consider and grant the approval for my intended field trip.

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Charles Rouikera

Appendix B - Information letter to the Provincial Secretary MUP

4/42 York Street
Hillcrest
Hamilton 3216
New Zealand
20th February 2012

The Provincial Secretary
Makira Ulawa Provincial (MUP)
C/- Kirakira Post Office
Makira Ulawa Province
Solomon Islands.

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN YOUR PROVINCE AND EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Dear Mr Comnis Ikioa,

I am a student at the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand. I have just completed a post-graduate diploma in Educational Leadership. I am currently working on my thesis for the Master in Educational Leadership, which involves carrying out research in Solomon Islands.

The title of my research project is, “The impact of a professional development programme on the effectiveness of school leaders in Solomon Islands”. The participants of my study will be the head teachers who attended this programme and its facilitators.

As an officer responsible for granting research permits in the province, I am seeking your approval for me to conduct this study by visiting and collecting data from selected primary schools and the Education Division Office (EDO) in your province. According to my plan, I would like to visit 6-8 schools including the EDO. My field trip is scheduled to be conducted in April/May 2012. I will await your response before contacting the potential participants (head teachers and facilitators) of my study.

I would be grateful if you would consider my request and grant permission for me to conduct my research in your province. Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Charles Rouikera

Appendix C - Information letter to the Chief Education Officer MUP

4/42 York Street
Hillcrest
Hamilton 3216
New Zealand
20th February 2012

Chief Education Officer
Makira Ulawa Education Authority (MUP)
C/- Kirakira Post Office
P.O. Box 80
Makira Ulawa Province
Solomon Islands.

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR LIST OF FACILITATORS AND HEAD TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE NEW AID FUNDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN YOUR PROVINCE

Dear Mr Henry Ratah,

I am a student at the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand. I am currently working on my thesis for the Master in Educational Leadership, which involves carrying out research in Solomon Islands.

The title of my research project is, “The impact of a professional development programme on the effectiveness of school leaders in Solomon Islands”. The participants of my study will be the head teachers who attended this programme and its facilitators.

Permission to conduct a study in the province has been granted by the provincial secretary. In order for me to identify the head teachers and facilitators I require a list of their names. I am planning to conduct my field trip in March/April 2010 and would be grateful if you would provide me the list of head teachers and facilitators through the above postal address, or through my email (cr14@students.waikato.ac.nz or rouikera@yahoo.com). You may contact my supervisor Jenny Ferrier-Kerr (jfk@waikato.ac.nz) should you wish to confirm and discuss my study and this request.

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Charles Rouikera

Appendix D – Invitation letter to the Primary School Head Teachers

4/42 York Street
Hillcrest
Hamilton 3216
New Zealand
20th February 2012

The Head Teacher

.....

SUBJECT: INVITATION LETTER

Dear.....

I am a student at the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand. I have just completed a post-graduate diploma in Educational Leadership. I am currently working on my thesis for the Master in Educational Leadership, which involves carrying out research in Solomon Islands.

The title of my research project is, “The impact of a professional development programme on the effectiveness of school leaders in Solomon Islands”. The participants of my study will be the head teachers who attended this programme and its facilitators.

You have been identified as one of the head teachers who attended this training and therefore you are invited to participate in this study. The collecting of data will take place through semi-structured interviews. If you are willing to be a participant in the study you will need to participate in an interview at a time convenient with you.

The data generated from this research will be used only for my Master in Educational Leadership Thesis, and other academic papers and presentations relating to my study. You are assured that all the information provided will be confidential. Also, you will be asked to review a summary of your interview and have the opportunity to add, change or delete information. If you have any concerns of an ethical nature regarding the study, please address them to myself in the first instance, and then to my supervisor, Jenny Ferrier-Kerr, of the Faculty of Education, at the University of Waikato (jfk@waikato.ac.nz).

If you are willing to participate in the study I would appreciate you completing the attached consent form and returning it to me.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Charles Rouikera

Appendix E - Invitation letter to the Facilitators

4/42 York Street
Hillcrest
Hamilton 3216
New Zealand
20th February 2012

Miss/Mrs/Mr
Facilitator of New Zealand Aid PDLP
.....

SUBJECT: INVITATION LETTER

Dear

I am a student at the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand. I have just completed a post-graduate diploma in Educational Leadership. I am currently working on my thesis for the Master in Educational Leadership, which involves carrying out research in Solomon Islands.

The title of my research project is, “The impact of a professional development programme on the effectiveness of school leaders in Solomon Islands”. The participants of my study will be the head teachers who attended this programme and its facilitators. You have been identified as one of the facilitators of this training and are invited to participate in my study.

The data generated from this research will be used only for my Master in Educational Leadership Thesis, and other academic papers and presentations relating to my study. You are assured that all the information provided will be confidential. Also, you will be asked to review a summary of your interview and have the opportunity to add, change or delete information. If you have any concerns of an ethical nature regarding the study, please address them to myself in the first instance, and then to my supervisor, Jenny Ferrier-Kerr, of the Faculty of Education, at the University of Waikato (jfk@waikato.ac.nz).

If you are willing to participate in the study I would appreciate you completing the attached consent form and returning it to me.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Charles Rouikera

Appendix F - Consent Form

Consent Form for head teachers and facilitators

Please read each statement carefully and put a tick in the box to show that you understand the research activities you will be involved in and the conditions before signing this form.

- My participation in the research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw any data up until receipt and reading of the interview summary.
- I, and my school/institution will not be identified in any discussions or publications of the research.
- All the information pertaining to me will be destroyed five years after the completion of this study.
- Any information obtained about me during the research will only be used for the purpose of the research study, published papers and presentations.
- I understand that I will be involved in semi-structured interviews which will digitally recorded, and that I may use the Solomon Pidgin (lingua franca) if I am more comfortable with it.
- Although all efforts will be made to ensure confidentiality, this cannot be guaranteed, due to the geographical closeness of those participating in the study.
- I have read and understood the above research guidelines for giving informed consent and agree to participate in this research.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix G - Interview Schedule for Head Teachers

Semi structured interview with head teachers

1. How long have you been in this school?
2. How long have you been in the position of a school leader?
3. What are your responsibilities in your role as a school leader?
4. What are your responsibilities in your role, in relation to providing professional support and guidance for your teachers?
5. How do you ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place in your school?
6. What are some of the challenges you encounter in your role as a school leader?
7. Do you think that your current qualifications and experiences have equipped you with the necessary knowledge and skills to confidently and effectively carry out your leadership roles and responsibilities?
8. How would you describe the New Zealand Aid funded professional development and learning programme for school leaders that you attended?
9. What has been the impact and implications of this training on your understanding of your role as a school leader? Your effectiveness?
10. How might this training have been improved?
11. What are your views on professional development and professional learning? Have they changed since your participation in the programme?

Prompts

Tell me more about.....

Can you explain.....? Or can you clarify?

What do you mean by that...?

Can you give an example of.....?

Can you elaborate on the previous point

In what ways....?

Why is it that.....?

Appendix H - Interview Schedule for Facilitators

Semi structured Interview with Facilitators

1. How long have you been working with Makira Ulawa Education Authority?
2. What are your main responsibilities in your current position?
3. How would describe your role in terms of providing professional support for teachers in this province?
4. How would you describe the New Zealand Aid funded professional development and learning programme for school leaders that you facilitated or involved in?
5. Do you think the understandings head teachers now have of their roles and responsibilities have changed? In what ways?
6. How did you (as a training facilitator) address cultural sensitivity or responsiveness in the training?
7. Did you encounter any issues in facilitating this training?
8. What changes, if any, would you make to this training?
9. From your point of view, what are some of the strategies that you think could be used to involve more teachers and educational leaders in professional learning?

Prompts

Tell me more about.....

Can you explain.....? Or can you clarify?

What do you mean by that...?

Can you give an example of?

Can you elaborate on the previous point

In what ways....?

Why is it that.....?