

CHAPTER 8

DISCREPANCIES AND FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

This study set out to identify the potential of primary-school-based NFE in Fiji. The research procedure discussed in Chapter 5 provided the general framework for the systematic collection and analysis of data to fulfill the purpose of this study. From an ideal model of NFE several key features and their assumptions were the basis against which practice represented in the data collected was assessed.

In order to identify the discrepancies between practice and the ideal, it was necessary to bring together data gathered by way of secondary sources, files and statements from government officials, opinions collected by interviews and workshops, and impressions gained through the visits to the schools and communities. The findings were validated against the data collected from key persons. The key persons were academics and others who had experience in and knowledge of NFE. Their perceptions are noted in the general discussion in chapter 9.

This chapter then presents the series of assumptions based on the ideal model, the evidence from both the documentary and the field research in terms of discrepancies between the assumptions and the evidence. In essence it discusses the match/mismatch between the ideal and the practice in the five schools selected as case studies for the field research undertaken.

8.2 Concept of NFE - Purpose

The ideal of NFE is based on the assumption that NFE is an organised educational activity that is deliberately planned and facilitated to meet specific purposes in a cultural context. In addition, NFE in terms of purpose is either used to bring change (social/cultural economic) or to maintain (the status quo) values. As a system it has special features contrasting NFE with formal education. It can be viewed as an alternative, supplement or complement to the established formal system. As a process the participation of the learners in decisions concerning all stages of the development of programmes is central. As a setting an informal and less structured learning climate is necessary.

Within the ranks of individuals and community groups who were associated with NFE programmes in the selected schools, there were conflicting perspectives of the concept of NFE. These perspectives were evident in the definitions and descriptions offered for the purposes of NFE programmes. Evidence gathered from secondary sources and all categories of participants by way of interviews and community workshops in each school confirmed these differences.

From the data gathered from the communities, headteachers and assistant headteachers it was evident that the purpose of NFE was seen as to remove the school-community gap and to maximise parental and community participation in schools. This initial purpose of NFE was evident in documentary sources as well as being confirmed by government officers who were closely associated with school-based NFE. The headteachers with the support of the government officers had initially introduced the concept of NFE as a means of addressing the problem of parental and community participation in formal education.

There was strong indication by some headteachers and government officials that community members needed to be 'educated' to understand their role and responsibilities in formal education, thus maximising their support for school activities. NFE programmes were therein deliberately planned and facilitated to respond to what were perceived to be the purposes of NFE - educating parents. From the data gathered it was confirmed that changes had occurred - these programmes were successful and the purpose was achieved. There were indications that in some communities parents had become more knowledgeable about their responsibilities. For example one headteacher commented, "The parental discussions groups offered at the school has enabled the parents to know their responsibilities. More parents and community members now participate in school activities and are supportive to their children's education".

NFE as a system was contrasted with the formal education system in relation to its purpose and perceived by some as an alternative. "I believe that NFE offers alternative programmes for those who do not do well academically", remarked one headteacher. This view was expressed on several occasions by some headteachers, assistant headteachers and also some government officials who believed that another purpose for offering NFE programmes at school was to relate the work of the school more closely to the life and work of the local community, and to inculcate in students an interest in NFE as an alternative means to a livelihood. For example, the demonstration projects on fish farms and poultry farm were perceived as examples of alternative programmes. For isolated schools such as Dakua and Vesi, the opportunity for students of further academic progress or secure job opportunities in the modern sector of the economy was limited for a number of reasons because of

various factors. For such schools, NFE activities such as farming projects provided options or alternatives for children when they left school. In this context NFE was perceived as an alternative to the formal programme for some students.

This conclusion was confirmed by headteachers, assistant headteachers and community members in the selected schools. In the ideal of NFE as a process the community members should have participated in decisions concerning the appropriateness of the programme to their problems. However, NFE programmes in all of the cases were formulated on assumed needs and were confined to parents, mainly in mothers' groups, who were the most active in the community. For example, at Yaka school where programmes had ceased, the first NFE programmes were the mothers' group. The failure to involve parents and community members in decisions concerning their needs and interests in these early developments of NFE may be explained by the inadequate knowledge of the concept NFE on the part of the facilitators.

There was evidence that as individuals and community members became more exposed to a wide range of views about NFE, through discussions, workshops and seminars, their knowledge and understanding of NFE broadened. They began to have a broader concept of NFE perceiving its purpose as relating a wider range of target groups and addressing the social problems and issues affecting their communities. At the three schools where programmes were sustained, the headteachers who had attended NFE workshops not only could broadly define NFE but also saw the purposes of NFE as virtually unlimited. In their conception they perceived NFE as educational activities and programmes organised to meet the problems and needs of community members and children. Their perception was not only of parents knowing their roles and

responsibilities but of the education of the whole community, involving children, out of school youths, parents and other community members. They confirmed that their limited knowledge, interests and understanding of NFE had been broadened through participation in NFE workshops and exposure to others' experiences.

However, while conceptual understanding of NFE is important, in practice the NFE programmes offered at the schools were different from each other in relation to their target groups. The two Indigenous Fijian schools offered activities for all the subgroups in the community including children at school, youths and parents. In the Indo-Fijian schools, the NFE programmes were mainly for the adults and youth. At one of the schools where programmes had ceased the headteacher, who also had participated in several NFE workshops, defined NFE as a means of responding to the needs of children and community members. While he was enthusiastic and made an effort to resuscitate the programmes at school after attendance at a NFE workshop he failed to solicit the support of the community members. This may be interpreted as supporting the view that, while conceptual understanding of NFE is important, practical social and cultural factors have to be considered.

On the other hand the headteacher at Yaka school had never been exposed to any NFE workshops. However, he was enthusiastic and supported the idea that one of the purposes of NFE is to educate the community members in the various social changes through NFE programmes, so that they be better equipped to fulfil their parental and other roles in the community. Assistant headteachers and community groups who had not been exposed to a wide range of views, proclaimed a single purpose for NFE. Their concept was that it had to be confined to

school-based activities and the immediate benefits to the school and community.

Of the five schools, the community members at Damanu School displayed heightened awareness of contemporary national problems and issues which had their effects in the local community. They recognised and appreciated the purposes of NFE in response to some of these issues and problems. Their awareness may be explained by their proximity to the tourist resorts and the capital city, as well as being the regular centre for NFE workshops and the focus of regular visits from government officials. These factors would have provided them access to more information and, in consequence, they were more informed than were members of other communities. In addition the experiences and knowledge of some retired school teachers and civil servants in the community could have influenced their perceptions and understanding of NFE. The headteacher had also attended several national workshops and a regional seminar on NFE, and had acted as a resource person for workshops held at the school. He was influential in the motivation and knowledge gained by the community on NFE.

Yaka School was also closer to the city. Although the programme had ceased, the community members were motivated and interested to reactivate their NFE programmes. They were aware of the changes affecting them and the programmes in NFE that would respond to their social needs. Conversely, the community members of those schools with less access to the city or town, and with infrequent visits from government or development agents, had limited knowledge and their concept of NFE was confined to school-based activities.

The community members at Damanu and Yaka Schools had a broader understanding of the purpose of NFE because of the factors mentioned above. NFE was perceived not only as a means of addressing problems in the school but also social, cultural and economical problems in the communities.

Government officials, especially those who were associated with school-based NFE defined NFE broadly, that is it has a variety of purposes. Those who had been exposed to NFE workshops and training had a better understanding of the concept. Some perceived NFE as complementary to formal education, whereby practical or vocationally oriented programmes complemented the formal and academic subjects. For example, offering practical projects such as those undertaken at Damanu School was an important aspect of this concept. But some placed emphasis on the education of the community members, as reflected in such comments as "When parents and other community members are educated on issues like nutrition, health and literacy, the children benefit". This view may be interpreted by the emphasis placed on the role and influence of parents in the education of their children, and also of some of the areas of needs in the community. The training for out of school youths in the community in a rural livelihood was also perceived by many informants as vital.

The key persons who were the most widely exposed to various views on NFE through their work, interaction and reading defined NFE broadly. They had a broader view of NFE's purposes. Several key persons perceived that if NFE were to be school-based, then its integration into the formal curriculum, to enable students to have a broader educational base and understanding was important. In this perspective NFE was not confined to the less able students. It embraced

everyone in the school. It was stressed by those who held this view that, if this perspective were adopted, it would overcome the notion that NFE is inferior to formal education and suited only for the academically less able.

There were those who validated the view expressed by some headteachers and government officials of the importance of NFE's purpose in the education of the community members, particularly in the rural communities, in developing understanding of the contemporary macro changes which had their effects in the education system and on the villagers' socio-economic and cultural life. Not a single key person perceived the purpose of NFE as being confined to school-based activities.

Some key persons perceived NFE as a two-way process - activities that could benefit the school and the community. But such activities were not confined to the school, as they involved taking students out into the community for educational, cultural and community service activities and also bringing experienced community members into the school to learn and share experiences. Many key persons perceived learning in a broader context and that it is not confined to the school but also occurs in the community. Their emphasis was on the education of the whole community members which involves, parents and youths.

In this study it was found that variance in concepts and experiences of NFE may be interpreted as the result of experiences, work responsibilities, exposure to a wide range of views through workshops, seminars, others' experiences and reading. Those headteachers, government officials and key persons who had a broad concept of NFE, were those who had experienced such exposure. While those who had limited

exposure, and were isolated in their perspectives, were confining them to NFE assisting the parents to properly support the school.

The community members in the selected schools which were closer to the city and towns had a better understanding of NFE than Vesi, Dakua and Kouvola. They were in regular contact with outside development agents. Through workshops and discussions they had a broader understanding of the concept of NFE than those in isolated communities.

It is evident from this study that while some individuals could define and viewed NFE as having the potential to serve several purposes, the operations in schools were different. Pragmatic purposes were more emphasised. There was generally limited understanding among most concerned of the processes of NFE. The operation of NFE is more than just initiating programmes to achieve the purpose. The active participation of the participants in the whole process is also important. The exposure to a variety of views and experiences through education and training is essential for facilitators and also potential participants to enable them to understand the different concepts and purposes and to determine the most appropriate programme in relation to their needs and cultural contexts.

From the various sources of evidence it is clear that NFE was defined or conceptualised through its purpose (or purposes). The initial purposes were to support the school and to provide an alternative for school leavers. However, few recognised the potential of NFE to deal with community-wide problems or with changes impacting on the communities and the families and individuals in the communities.

8.3 **Planning and Decision Making in NFE Programmes**

The ideal in planning NFE programmes is that, at every stage of the programme, the facilitator and the learners co-operatively plan and decide every stage from initiation, identification of needs, formulation of content, selecting of methods and concepts of learning, to programme management and evaluation.

As noted earlier, in the initiation of NFE programmes decisions were made by government officials and headteachers to institute NFE programmes in schools. What Bagnall (1989) termed 'presence' and in some cases 'involvement' were evident. In some cases the community members were present but the decisions in terms of content, and methods were made by the facilitators. In some cases there was involvement, the interaction between facilitators and community members.

From the data collected there was evidence that in the three schools, Damanu, Dakua and Kauvula with programmes, both government and non-government representatives with the headteachers facilitated community workshops and discussions and collaborated with community members to discuss problems, identify needs and plan programmes. For example, at Kauvula School the youths and parents confirmed that they constructed toilet facilities and raised funds to assist needy students and families. There was also knowledge and skills gained from literacy and other programmes. Some adult male members at Kauvula School proudly stated that they could write their names, whereas previously they used their thumbs to sign documents. At Damanu School, knowledge and skills had been gained and co-operation was enhanced among the students, parents and teachers. The evidence of

physical and knowledge change that had occurred in these communities may be explained in the collaboration between the facilitator and community members in decisions about NFE programmes that related to their needs.

Data from the two schools with discontinued programmes revealed that at the beginning of programmes the community members and headteachers were involved in the planning and decisions concerning programme. The co-operation between the headteacher and community members in planning had resulted in some changes. For example at Vesi School, academic achievements of children at school were raised and their children gained carpentry skills and made household furniture such as beds and tables. At Yaka School the women and young females had worked together to gain knowledge and skills in sewing, cooking and craft. It was evident that there was consultation and mutual agreement in planning and programming. This outcome had been knowledge and skills gained and widespread co-operation resulting in the changes that had occurred in the communities.

However, it was also revealed by some community members that, during the implementation stage as more programmes were added and external resources were granted to the school, some headteachers no longer consulted the school committees and community members. For example, at Vesi School, community participation only occurred during the first workshop to discuss their problems and identify their needs. Community participation had lapsed during the implementation stage as decisions and management of the programmes were handled by the headteacher. This situation also occurred at Yaka School. The school committee and community members were no longer consulted or involved in decisions concerning programmes during the implementation

stage. The community was not even kept informed of the management of programmes. Neither were any records kept or indications given of the use of funds collected from sale of products and of financial grants from other agencies. Records of the programme planning decisions do not appear to have been kept. Perhaps there was a lack of trust and faith by professionals in the abilities of community members to be fully involved in all decisions regarding NFE programmes. On the other hand it has to be recognised that most headteachers were not trained in NFE, but learned from their own experiences. They may have not been fully aware of the processes of NFE, and had not learned them either formally or by experience.

In the three schools where the programmes were still functioning, there was evidence of support and co-operation among the school staff, the school committee and community members in the initiation and the planning of NFE activities. Community support was related to the results of NFE. Some indicated that their support for the programmes was enhanced when they saw evidence in the attitudes of their children and the activities which yielded results, such as the women acquiring sewing skills. Most of the teachers in these schools showed interest and were aware of the NFE activities.

Conversely, in schools where programmes were not functioning, the headteachers did not solicit the continuous involvement and participation of their staff and community members. As a result the programmes collapsed when they left the school.

Most government officials supported the notion that community members should be involved in decisions regarding NFE programmes.

This view was validated by most of the key persons. A key person remarked that :

We must not tell people about their problems or what they have to do, but facilitate discussions where they can discuss and identify things that constrain them. When the community are conscious of their problems and what has to be done they do not have to rely on outside assistance or leadership.

Similarly, another key person who had wide practical as well as academic experience in NFE remarked that:

I believe NFE is a means where people can see their own situation realistically. Our tradition has a top-down approach perpetuated by some development agents telling people what changes are good for them. This has contributed to our cultural passivity and non-enquiry attitude. Mental liberation must be used as a means of achievement. Programmes and projects are to be used as a vehicle for learning rather than ends in themselves. Most important the learners must be involved in decisions concerning the programmes.

The two statements reaffirm that the concept of NFE is more than just initiating programmes but that the potential participants must be involved in decisions concerning programmes, and must understand the rationale of their participation in every stage of the programme.

Another view was expressed by a key person who stated that:

To get the people in the community to be involved and participate in decisions and planning does not involve a day's workshop or discussion. Several workshops and discussions are required so that the community members are empowered to take responsibility. Delegation of responsibility and leadership among the community members is vital in the sustainability of NFE programmes.

These views re-affirm the importance of participation of community members in decisions regarding NFE programmes, and the importance of empowering people for leadership responsibilities to eventually take control of their learning situation. The distinction between involvement and participation was made by Ikin (1989:187) who states:

Involvement suggests that advice, support or assistance might be sought from the community; participation implies acceptance that power and control will have to be re-allocated to some extent. Participation occurs when individual or group has equal power with authority to determine the outcomes and decisions.

From the study it was found that most of the government officers and key persons agreed that community members should be fully involved in all decisions regarding NFE programmes. However, in practice the expediency of some headteachers, supported by government officials and outside facilitators in starting programmes and attracting resources resulted in insufficient indepth discussion of programming issues and problems. Community members were consequently unable to understand fully the rationale for the projects and programmes. They were not empowered to take leadership responsibility.

The emphasis on skill training yielded immediate results that gave NFE its credibility. As outside interest increased, some primary-school-based programmes became 'show pieces'. As this occurred, the community members' participation diminished and most community groups did not feel ownership of the programmes. The opportunity was not taken to use the successes of the NFE programmes to increase the participants' understanding of, or involvement in, the NFE programmes.

During the implementation stage in some of these schools there was neither any follow up discussions nor any formative evaluation to determine the progress of the programmes or to identify problems. There was confusion and conflict among community members in schools as there were no clear indication of their ongoing role in the programming processes. For example, at Damanu School, at the time of the research, the women's programme, which had been functioning quite well, had ceased due to some differences of view among the women. There were no strategies to discuss differences and conflicts during the implementation stage.

It is evident that the sustainability of programmes in schools depends on the co-operation of all the groups involved and their participation and involvement in every stage of the programme. In some of the schools, although the community members may not have been fully involved in all the stages of NFE, their co-operation and support had been enhanced when they saw the evidence of the success of the programmes through concrete results. The evidence from the case studies indicates that it is not sufficient to involve the community members during the initiation of NFE programmes, but that their participation must be maintained throughout the implementation stages, and that ongoing discussion must be maintained as a means of evaluation to determine the strengths and the problems.

Townsend Coles (1981:13) emphasised the importance of small committees to being responsible for programmes, as this strategy ensures the participation of people as well as enabling consultation to take place. In schools where committees were set up the responsibilities were shared and the teachers and community members co-operated to support all the NFE activities they had planned. The delegation of leadership responsi-

bilities to key people with experience should thus ensure sustainability of programmes even when headteachers are transferred.

From the evidence it is clear that in schools where the community members had participated in planning and decisions concerning every stage of the NFE programmes, there had been success. Conversely, NFE programmes had collapsed in schools where the headteachers had not solicited the continuous involvement and participation of their staff and community members.

8.4 Participants in NFE Programme

In this study the assumption drawn from the ideal model of NFE was that every community member is a potential participant in NFE activities and activities or participants should be selected in consultation with community leaders, government officials and non-government workers. Participation in any educational programmes depends a lot on those who plan and decide on the programmes. While the disadvantaged individuals or groups may be the starting point of NFE activity, they should not be the only focus as every community member is a potential participant and their multi-dimensional roles should be recognised.

The ideal is every individual but the problem in Fiji is that the individual is less important than the 'group' so the target are disadvantaged groups. In the course of this study evidence gathered indicated that group participation was emphasised and important in the community life of both racial groups. It was revealed by headteachers and some government officials that parents who were directly connected with the school through their children was the primary target group. They were perceived to be 'disadvantaged' as they lacked the knowledge

and skills for effective parenting. Their participation was indicated by headteachers, assistant headteachers and some government officials as important in relation to the educative role and support in the education of their children.

On the other hand, children, those at school and school leavers were also target groups perceived as 'disadvantaged' in relation to unemployment - in need of motivation to develop an interest in practical projects, so that they could have a choice when they left school. But, as pointed out by several government workers and validated by some key persons, in the cultural context of the study it was important that the various subgroups in the community were involved because of their roles and responsibilities in relation to family and community living. These subgroups included youths, women and children, not only parents who were directly connected with the school through their children. Group participation was emphasised because of the complementarity of roles in the community. In fact everyone is seen as a potential participant in the community because everyone is a member of the community.

Persuading the community to participate in NFE programmes involved communicating information to the various groups in the community. The approaches used were slightly different in each school. But, in all schools, the school committee was an important link to the community. For the three Indigenous Fijian schools, the traditional communication structure was used, whereby the school committee first consulted the chiefs or village headmen before the community members were notified, whilst in the Indo-Fijian schools communication was through the school committee and letters sent through children.

As revealed by some headteachers and some government officers, in most communities, disadvantaged groups or potential individual participants may not be aware of the need to participate in NFE programmes. As one headteacher remarked, 'It is the attitude of some people in the community that they are fine and that only other community members have the problems'. Strategies articulated by several headteachers and government officers included consultation with the community members, creating awareness of problems in the community through community discussions and workshops were held at schools. Through discussions and workshops, problems and needs were identified and, once the various community groups were convinced of their relevance, they participated in activities organised at the school. However, in some schools this process was not followed and programmes were started on the initiatives of the headteachers without consultation and involvement of the community members.

As a result some of the programmes were perceived by the community members as being irrelevant to their needs and did not participate. As remarked by a vocal community member:

E so na ka e caka tu oqo e koro-ni- vuli keimami laki vakaitavi kina, ia keimami sega tiko ni kila vinaka na kena yaga. (We participate in some of the programmes held at school but we are unclear about their value.)

This comment highlights the practice in some schools of involvement of community members in NFE programmes without their fully conceptualising and understanding the purposes or processes of the activities.

A similar comment was made by the adult education co-ordinator.

Parents and community members fail to be consistent with their participation and support for NFE programmes and this has affected the performance of children at school.

This may be interpreted as the lack of understanding by the parents of the benefit of their participation and the irrelevance of the NFE programmes.

In the selection of participants in each school there were some discrepancies. In some schools NFE programmes were established for various subgroups without indepth and thorough discussions of their problems and needs to enable the target groups to fully understand the rationale of their participation. Some participants felt obliged to attend because it was expected of them by the authorities, while some attended because they did not want to 'lose face' with the others. But some attended because they were interested to participate in and support the school. Conversely, in schools where perhaps there were thorough discussions and the participants had understood the rationale of NFE programmes and their benefits, there was indication of interest and constant participation of the target groups.

It is evident from this study that while every one is a potential participant in NFE programmes, they must understand the rationale for their participation, if they are to engage effectively. While the purpose of their participation might not be obvious to them in the beginning, through several workshops and indepth discussions they should be made aware of the need as community member for participation in NFE programmes. In relation to this the following remark was made by a government officer and validated by several key persons.

Sometimes potential participants are unaware that they need education or training because of familiarity and contentment with the existing situation. They cannot see their problems, unless someone points it out to them. The facilitator must assist them to recognise and understand why they have to participate.

From the various sources of evidence it is clear that while every community member is a potential participant, enabling people to understand why they should participate will depend a lot on how they perceive the programme meeting their needs. As stated above, sometimes people need to be assisted or guided to recognise their problems and the reasons they have to participate in programmes. Through consultation, workshops and discussions held at schools, some community members had been enabled to understand the relevance of NFE activities and why they had to participate.

8.5 The Identification of Educational Needs in NFE Programme

The assumption based on the ideal model of NFE is that the identification of needs is a co-operative action between the facilitator and the learners. Initially the facilitator sets up the process and structures whereby the participants who are involved participate equally in identifying their own needs and problems through various methods.

It was ascertained from the data collected that several approaches were used by the facilitators to identify needs in the communities. In all schools community dialogue was the starting point of creating awareness of the problems which the facilitators perceived existed in the community.

In three of the five schools, two in which the NFE programme was still operating and one in which the NFE programme had ceased, the headteachers confirmed that community discussions and workshops were facilitated with the assistance of government officials and members of FANFE to determine needs. In the other two schools the approaches taken involved community discussions, individual as well as group interviews. For example at Kauvula School it was related by the headteacher and confirmed by the assistant headteacher that the adult male population in the community were not only interviewed individually but also as a group to determine their literacy needs. The same process was applied to the women and the youths.

The important role of the facilitator in setting the structure and enabling the process of NFE to occur has been emphasised continuously by informants in this study. For example, a key person with substantial practical and academic experience offered this suggestion :

Potential will only be seen in terms of the needs of the people. Potential will always exist with people. But the realisation of that potential will depend on how the process is facilitated and the perceptions of peoples' needs.

This statement affirms the importance of the facilitating process in creating awareness to enable potential participants to recognise their needs and understand the rationale for their participation and the role of the facilitator in enabling the process to occur. As identified in this study these processes included consultation, group discussions and workshops.

The importance of identifying both individual and community needs was emphasised by some government officials and validated by many key persons. The objective was to ensure that each individual

expressed his/her views freely. This objective was sometimes difficult to achieve in community discussions particularly among the women. A key person who had undertaken some research on the communal way of life pointed out that:

The national government in its development programmes has placed too much emphasis on communal needs, forgetting the individuals. It is a fallacy to think that everyone who lives in community or village has the same needs. There must be some balance between individual and community needs.

This comment acknowledges the importance of identifying both the individual and communal needs and responding to both of them accordingly. A government officer who was involved in the identification of needs at Daku School, revealed that individual needs were to a large extent closely related to the group needs.

The nature of needs determined were different and was based in the target groups. At Damanu, Vesi and Kouvula - the Indigenous Fijian schools - the target groups were the youths, students at school, parents and community members. The needs addressed included skill training in farming for the youths and students at school, sewing and craft skills for women, health, nutrition and parents education. In the two Indo Fijian schools the community needs identified ranged from skill training and sports for youths to functional literacy for the adult members. The needs of women were especially related to their domestic role, for example sewing skills. The headteachers indicated that one of the greatest needs in the communities was enabling the people to understand the changes and how they should take action to help themselves and their communities. Parents education was an important need identified by all the schools.

The above paragraph indicates clearly the necessity of differentiating how needs of individuals, target groups and the community as a whole need to be addressed separately. They need to be assessed in different ways.

The study indicated clearly that community members or participants must be involved in the identification of their own needs and problems, through various educational means, such as case studies, workshops, discussions and group interviews. However, it was also found that in practice, the participants were only involved in certain stages of the needs assessment process of NFE programme. The comments from some community members that some projects offered at the school did not interest the community and were not relevant to their needs may be interpreted as indicating that these programmes were formulated from needs assumed by the facilitators. Further, some of these projects were initiated without the knowledge and involvement of the participants on the initiative of the headteachers, as demonstration projects for students and community members.

While some NFE programmes were perceived by the headteachers to be relevant to the needs in the community, it was not a felt need for them. There were cases where the NFE activities were initiated by the headteachers without consultation with community members and as a result the activity ceased. For example, a headteacher initiated a goat project without consulting the local community members. In spite of their advice against it because of climate unsuitability, he continued with the project which resulted in failure and wastage of energy and resources. The latter is a good example of a programme initiated contrary to the advice of community members and is the opposite of needs based programming.

In some situations it was identified from the data collected that the community members were often not aware of some of their problems and needs. This may be explained because of their insularity and their familiarity and contentment with their way of life. The role of the facilitator in assisting them to recognise their unmet needs was articulated by government officers and some headteachers and also validated by some key persons as important. For example, some headteachers in schools where programmes were existing stated that, through discussions, community members became aware of some of their problems and were convinced of the importance of some needs of which they were unaware, such as nutrition and health.

A key person was sceptical about the likelihood of most workshops conducted in NFE to identify needs and problems because, according to her, they became more often 'talk shops' where the government officers directed people as to what they should do. She suggested that projects be integrated into workshops as a vehicle for learning wherein community members make critical analysis for their own situations.

The ideal is that the identification of needs is a co-operative action between the facilitator and the learners. The evidence gathered from different sources clearly indicated that in some programmes participants were involved and participated equally in identifying their own needs through various methods. However, in schools particularly where programmes had ceased, community members were involved partially. In some cases they were not consulted at all or projects initiated were contrary to their advice.

8.6 Content of NFE Programmes

The ideal formulation of curriculum content is based on the needs of the learners formulated collaboratively by the learners and facilitator. However, subject content perceived to be relevant in terms of vocational and social roles relevant to the cultural context is also considered important and should be integrated into the programme. Record keeping is important in the formulation of content.

In all schools there were indications from the headteachers and some assistant headteachers and government officials that the programme content or activities were based on the needs identified through workshops and discussions. The nature of needs determined through various approaches was the basis on which the programme content of NFE was formulated.

But in some cases there were unmet needs in the community, for example, nutrition which the professionals perceived as being important to community survival. Through discussions and the assistance of personnel from other agencies, the community members became convinced of the relevance of some of these needs to their lives. These needs were then translated into topics and integrated into their programme content. It was found that, in most schools, programme content was based on both the needs generated by the communities which were mainly skill oriented and those perceived by the school and government authority as being relevant to community living and rural livelihood.

The headteachers and government officials described programme contents of various programmes as relating to the needs of the target groups. The categories of the content is as follow:

Target Groups	Content
(a) School Children	Fish Farming, goat rearing, agricultural projects, poultry, piggery and health education.
(b) School Leavers	Spiritual study, functional literacy, sports, agricultural projects and carpentry skills.
(c) Parents	Communication skills, interpersonal skills, parenting, health, nutrition and functional literacy.
(d) Women	Sewing, cooking, craft, screen printing, home management and budgeting.
(e) Community	Health, nutrition, leadership skills and community development issues.

While there was practical evidence of these activities, only two schools had records of them. One school had a comprehensive programme of activities with topics taken, time, location and resources used. The programme was flexible and varied according the needs of the various groups. In the other schools, there were no records of programme content or topics of what had been discussed, for example in parents' education or health.

It was evident that many of the activities were ad hoc and lacked proper planning and management of programmes. Activities and programmes were undertaken with enthusiasm and interest to show immediate results, without a real understanding of the processes involved in their management. Record keeping is an important part of an

organised educational activity such as NFE, but it was found to be neglected in some of the schools.

From the various sources of evidence it was obvious that formulation of programme content was either on the needs of participants which were largely on skill training or the content perceived by the headteachers and government officers as being useful to their individual and community lives.

8.7 Instructional Methods In NFE Programmes

The programmatic ideal with respect to instructional methods is based on the assumption that people remember best what they discover and do for themselves, as it is this process which generates learning and meaning. Therefore, the instructional methods which induce active participation and involvement of the learners and are culturally acceptable were seen as being important. In addition, indigenous learning strategies, methods and techniques familiar to the learners and which encourage an informal and flexible setting should be considered.

Responses to interviews and workshops, as well as documentary sources, identified three main methods used in selected schools to maximise participation. They comprised group processes, the use of aids, both visual and documentary and practical demonstration.

For group processes, the use of community workshops and small group discussion were used by all schools to enable participants to talk about their needs, problems and issues. According to evidence from headteachers, assistant headteachers, community groups and government officers (and as validated by key persons) the method was well suited in

the cultural context of the study. The suitability of group processes is related to the importance of oral communication and maintenance of group consensus. Although the Indo-Fijian community lives on individual farm land, which may suggest individualism, there is a strong communal relationship and support among them, and the use of small groups was an effective means of soliciting maximum participation (refer to Chapter 5).

However, some headteachers and government officials noted that cultural sensitivity was important in how small groups were organised in the cultural context. In both racial communities the maintenance of relationships and the associated cultural protocol have to be respected and followed. In Indo-Fijian and some Indigenous communities, community members prefer gender groupings. The rationale given was that women could express themselves better among themselves. For those who did not communicate, for example son-in-law and father-in-law, they had to be in separate groups to maximise their participation.

The use of teaching aids to enhance and maximise learning was well supported by many informants. In two of the schools, which were still operating NFE activities, rooms were allocated to NFE in which were displayed posters and pictorial illustrations, such as road signs. They were used as teaching aids in literacy programmes. Health charts and some of the pictorial illustrations used in formal learning were used by the teachers in the NFE programmes. Teaching aids, such as pictures and posters, documentary films and videos were considered by most informants to be very effective and powerful means of delivering information and changing attitudes. It was revealed by some headteachers, assistant headteachers and government officers that adults, like children, prefer to hear, visualise and participate in practical projects.

Practical demonstrations of projects at schools and in the community were another method used by some schools. The NFE activities and projects undertaken in schools were claimed by most headteachers and government officials to demonstrate practical experiences which had been neglected in formal education. The institutionalising of education has emphasised teacher-centred or subject-centred learning, with the knowledge and skills taught being divorced from the daily experiences and environment of the children.

For the adult community groups and youths, practical experiences through farming or sewing maximised their individual as well as their group participation. As already discussed in some schools some of the NFE projects were initiated by some headteachers without the involvement of the community members. Some headteachers indicated that most community members were like the Biblical Thomas - they needed some evidence before they would believe. So the NFE demonstration projects such as fish farms, poultry and piggery were envisaged to be emulated by community members or youths in their villages and also provided practical experience and motivation for the children at school.

The primary-school-based demonstration projects provided an opportunity for other schools to recognise and understand that academic as well as practical learning experiences could both be organised and offered at the school for the children and the community. In addition, the projects could be a source of income generation for the school. For example, at Damanu the project on broilers and fish farms generated some income, which was used to buy much needed stationery and books for the children. Nearby schools visited the school to observe and learn from its NFE experience. At Vesi School, before the programmes

ceased, the community members reported that those youths who were doing carpentry skills used to travel to other schools and communities to offer demonstration classes. This was one of the successful school programmes.

This was an important process, as it facilitated the sharing of knowledge and skills and also motivated other headteachers and community members. However, some community members expressed their disappointment that such knowledge and skills were not demonstrated in their homes and communities. It was noted that, while youths had made beds and other furniture, they were for the school.

There was also evidence that in some schools the indigenous learning methods were used. For example, in Damanu and Dakua schools experienced community members were brought into the schools to teach craft and dances (mekes). The headteacher at Yaka, an Indo Fijian school related that, experienced women from the community were brought to school to teach chants and traditional wedding songs to girls in school and school leavers. However, these indigenous methods and strategies were not widely used in schools.

Most key persons emphasised the importance of instructional methods which maximised the practical participation of the participants. However, many also pointed out the importance of methods which encourage individual liberation and understanding of the processes of NFE. For example, group discussion on community problems and issues was perceived by some key persons as encouraging individuals to think for themselves.

From the various sources, it was evident that, in general, most of the methods used at the selected schools encouraged the involvement and participation of those persons connected with the programmes and were appropriate to the cultural context of this study. The group processes, visual experiences and practical demonstrations should have enabled the participants to understand both the processes and the practical experiences. While most of the methods identified could have facilitated both these experiences, it was found that in some schools practical experiences may have been more emphasised. For such schools, the participation lapsed, because the facilitators failed to sustain an ongoing follow-up discussions and involvement of the community members - ensuring that they were mentally alert to the progress of the programmes and the problems which had emerged. The most demonstration projects were also primary-school-based and there was no evidence of their emulation in the communities.

8.8 The Organisation and Management of NFE Programmes

The standards drawn from the ideal model with respect to the management and organisation of NFE are for decentralisation of decision making and a well defined mechanism established at every level - national, regional and local - and in which providers of NFE are brought together for joint planning and consultation, with the views of the community and potential participants suppressed. The structures should be able to respond to, and accommodate, the geographical and cultural differences, and to empower the participants in decisions which affect them.

The organisation and management of NFE in all of the schools studied was not well defined. Considering that NFE was not an established system, it was difficult to determine accurately how it operated. However, from the data collected there was evidence that some organisation and management occurred at three levels: national, divisional and community.

As already mentioned, at the national level the MYEOS officially co-ordinates NFE activities in primary schools. However, primary schools are under the administration of the Ministry of Education, Women, Culture, Science and Technology (MEWCST). NFE programmes in schools are therefore under the responsibility of two ministries. The division of authority has created confusion, not only among the government officers but also the teachers and community members.

It is believed by most headteachers, some community members, some government officers and a number of key persons, that the organisation and management of NFE at the national level should be within the MEWCST. In its current base, the MYEOS, NFE is limited as the focus of the ministry is on youth. As explained by the officer responsible for NFE, her official title is 'Youth Officer' responsible for adult and community education. In her view the general perception of most people is that MYEOS is for youths who have failed, in the formal system, and that the programmes instituted for them are 'stop gap'. In addition, most of the officers who worked for MYEOS lacked a broad conceptual understanding of NFE and its potential, as they narrowly focussed on youth and their needs.

Several key persons supported the notion that NFE should not be under the umbrella of MYEOS, because that ministry undervalues NFE's importance and potential role. The MEWCST was suggested by several informants to be the better co-ordinating ministry, because it has a well established system with a structure of divisional and district offices. It is thus in a better position for closer interaction and communication with schools and headteachers. A distinguished key person with vast teaching experience suggested the establishment of a Centre for NFE to be part of the MEWCST. He emphasised that it should be an independent entity, and accorded a significant proportion of national resources. He added that it is not the structure that is important but resources and capable leadership. Those government officers who supported the notion that MYEOS should be the co-ordinating ministry suggested the name to be changed to Ministry of NFE, and to encompass youth, adults and women's programmes.

MYEOS is located in the capital city, Suva and at the time of the research had only one designated officer for school-based NFE. Although other youth officers assisted in the task, the scattered nature of schools and communication difficulties resulted in infrequent visits and inadequate support. These problems were confirmed by the headteachers, assistant headteachers and community members.

It is recognised that NFE is not an established system in schools and, as such, there is no clear concept or policy in relation to its organisation and management at any level.

A government document on Policies and Strategies For the Short and Medium Term, which was discussed at the last National Economic Summit in Suva in 1989, stated the following policy.

3.4 Youth and Adult Community Programmes

This programme is to concentrate on attitude re-training of parents and to educate them on responsible parenthood. A balanced approach to child rearing leads to better development of youths. Hence, less measures would be required to address social problems being encountered. This programme incorporates the Family/Home Life activities designed to interest parents in contributing to effective schooling and appropriate support for children.

(National Economic Summit Report, 1989:98)

This policy emphasises parents' education in relation to effective schooling. It reflects neither the current conceptual operation of NFE in schools nor its potential. As such it is limiting.

At the Divisional Level, the administration of both the secondary and primary schools is the responsibility of the Divisional Education Officer (DEO). The Senior Education Officer for Primary (SEOP) is responsible for primary schools. In Education Divisions where both the DEO and SEOP were supportive of the concept of NFE and primary-school-based programmes, the headteachers were officially supported in their innovatory work. For example, in the Northern Division, the strong support from the SEOP resulted in the establishment of NFE programmes at Kauvula and several other schools. The initiation of primary-school-based NFE in the Northern Division was largely due to her enthusiasm and support in facilitating workshops and seminars on NFE for headteachers.

In other Divisions, while the Divisional and Senior Education Officers expressed their interest in the concept of primary-school-based NFE and supported the programmes, there were no clear directives or

strategies in relation to the initiation or on-going support of primary-school-based NFE programmes.

Several senior officers in the divisions expressed their concern for the lack of communication from the Director and the officers in the Ministry of Youths, Employment Opportunities and Sports about primary-school-based NFE initiatives in their divisions. According to these officers, they should be informed of schools offering NFE programmes, so that maximum support is offered in terms of visits and suitable staff.

At the community level, each school managed and organised its own programmes. The overall co-ordination of NFE programmes was under the responsibility of the headteachers. Most government officials and some community members believed that, because of their leadership role at the school, the headteachers were in the best position to undertake the task. In the three schools where programmes were still functioning there was an indication of responsibilities undertaken by committees selected by the community members themselves to organise and monitor programmes. There was also involvement of staff members. Where this involvement occurred, there was interest, and most staff members were aware of NFE programmes and activities. One of the schools had a comprehensive programme of activities. Conversely, in schools where programmes had ceased it was mentioned by some community members that the headteachers did not delegate responsibilities. Although the community members were involved, they were not fully aware of decisions regarding programmes. In these schools there was token participation from the community members who did not feel ownership to the programmes.

The data collected have revealed the limitation of the current policy and the inadequacy of the current structures at all levels - national, regional and community - to respond meaningfully to the needs in NFE. It is evident that the sustainability of NFE programmes in schools depends on well defined NFE structures at all levels, to respond to the cultural and geographical differences.

8.9 Resources in NFE Programme

The ideal identified for resources is that local resources in terms of personnel and facilities should be identified and mobilised for the programmes and, only when not available locally, should external resources be sought to supplement local resources.

Data gathered from all sources revealed that a number of resources, both local and outside, were available to schools to support their NFE programmes. Responses to interviews and workshops listed some and general observation unearthed others. These resources included people, facilities, finance and advice.

Local Resources

The local resources identified included the resources at school and those in the community. At the school the headteachers of the selected schools confirmed the existence of facilities and personnel. This view was enhanced by most government officers and validated by some key persons. The general consensus of most professionals interviewed was that schools were under utilised and unused in the evenings and during the school vacations.

Facilities

The use of the school as a co-ordinating centre for NFE programmes for community members by the school and other development agencies was well supported by all groups, government officials, headteachers, some assistant headteachers and key persons. The strategy was perceived to minimise overlapping of programmes and encourage co-operation and sharing of limited resources for the benefit of the community.

In some schools there were special rooms allocated for NFE programmes, where the adult groups met once a week. For example, at Damanu and Kouvula, where programmes were sustained, rooms were allocated for NFE activities. In the other school the headteacher claimed that the timetable was arranged so that a room was free every Thursday afternoon for the women's sewing group. In one of the schools where the programme had ceased, the room which was used for NFE was being used for kindergarten, whilst at the other school it was used as a library. When interviewed, some community members stated that it was preferable to meet at school because of the facilities, space, and because they could see their children. In addition, most women informants welcomed the idea of the school as a base, because they felt relaxed and did not have to worry about their household chores.

However, some key persons questioned the suitability of school facilities for NFE adult programmes, in terms of furniture and teachers as facilitators. School furniture is made for children, and teachers are trained to teach children, not adults. However, it was found that adults and youths in most schools coped quite well with school facilities and the problem was not noted at the local level.

Each school had unused land. In the three Indigenous schools, the unused land was utilised for garden projects for the students and youths, and also used for fish farms, poultry and a piggery. Using school land for demonstration projects was a way of motivating Indigenous youths and students to value and utilise their land for farming as a means of livelihood. For the Indo-Fijian schools which had to lease land from Indigenous people, usually not much land was available for demonstration projects. However, the two schools did have garden projects for the students. So the students were also able to learn some agricultural skills.

Personnel

In terms of personnel, the headteachers were the principal co-ordinators and facilitator of programmes. In one school, the headteacher was innovative and charismatic, and enthused the staff to be involved with the programme. But in some schools some assistant headteachers and female staff were persuaded by the headteachers to be involved and they assisted in the facilitation. These were the teachers who showed interest and wanted to be involved. It was found that not all teachers were involved and interested, as some perceived NFE as involving them in tasks additional to their primary role in formal teaching.

Some community members and headteachers who confirmed their support for primary-school-based NFE, articulated the need for either a full time person or an additional teacher to co-ordinate NFE activities. The view that the co-ordinator needs to be a teacher to maintain credibility with the school staff was expressed several times. Such view may be interpreted as undermining the capability of key influential people in the community to co-ordinate NFE activities. It also indicates

that the informants believe NFE should be co-ordinated only by professionals.

Interest and commitment were perceived by some headteachers and some government officers as important qualities for those teachers involved in primary-school-based NFE programmes. Remuneration based on these two elements as an incentive for involvement in NFE was proposed by some key persons.

The overall co-ordination and management of facilities and resources used for NFE in all schools were controlled by the headteachers. For example, the sport equipment for youths at Dakua School as well as the sewing machines were under the overall responsibility of the headteachers. Generally, it was found that facilities in schools were well utilised and maintained.

However, concerns were expressed in some schools by some teachers, and even some members of the school committee, with regard to the use and maintenance of school property and management. Some teachers observed that school resources should primarily concentrate on formal education, and that formal education was the role for which teachers were trained. This view had emerged from one assistant headteacher and some community members who had observed the amount of time some headteachers spent on NFE activities and questioned the rationale and school resources spent on these activities. Such views and observations may be justified, as it has to be noted that NFE activities were ad hoc and NFE is not an established system.

From the research evidence, the teachers who were involved in primary-school-based NFE expressed their interests and support. Those teachers and community members who did not continue with their NFE programmes expressed negative comments about the organisation of programmes. However, in most cases there was potential for greater utilisation of facilities in the evenings, weekends and during school vacations, and for the harnessing of all the teachers in the facilitation.

Community Resources

The experienced and knowledgeable people in the community were identified by the headteachers and sometimes by the community members themselves. In the women's sewing programmes in all the schools, it was revealed that women with skills in sewing and craft taught the others. There was a sharing of skills among the women and they learned from one another. At Damanu School the local church minister facilitated religious programmes for youths. Some NFE committee members coordinated youth farming projects and assisted in organising team sports. In schools where the headteachers were persuasive and had good rapport with the community members, they were able to mobilise the human as well as the material resources in the communities. For example, at Kauvula, through the leadership of the headteacher, the community members raised funds to assist needy families and to buy sports equipment for youths.

Outside Resources

Outside resources which were in the form of advisory and finance supplement the local resources. Two agencies with major influence on the selected schools, because of their official connection, were MEWCST and MYEOS.

Personnel

Officers from the two ministries, particularly the Director of MYEOS, the officer responsible for NFE in schools and the SEOP in the Northern Division, were acknowledged by the teachers and some community members as being especially valuable and supportive. These officers had assisted the schools in facilitating community awareness workshops. They also secured financial or material resources for the NFE programmes. Through the support of the youth officer responsible for NFE, women's programmes in four schools were provided with equipment and material. For example, five sewing machines and four bales of material were donated to Dakua, four sewing machines to Vesi, three sewing machines to Yaka and three sewing machines to Dakua.

Government officials who seemed to be held in high esteem by headteachers and some community members were those who made regular contacts with the community. Some were considered to relate their own area of expertise to the needs of the schools and community, with warm and approachable personalities and the capacity to provide useful contacts and resources. Those who measured up to these standards were those whose official responsibilities included primary-school-based NFE programmes and those government officials who had been exposed to NFE workshops, seminars and courses.

Other government and non-government agencies which provided support from time to time to the selected schools included the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI), which assisted in the establishment of the Fish Farm at Dakua School, and the Ministry of Health which, through its Divisional and District Health Officers, provided regular visits to schools to give health talks and seminars to the communities. The district officers and provincial officers also gave support to primary-school-based NFE programmes. For example, at Dakua School the district officer gave a some financial grant to assist in the completion of a dining room for the children.

FANFE was one of the NGOs committed to the concept of primary-school-based NFE and through its president and members was instrumental in facilitating NFE workshops in the communities to create awareness on school-based programmes. FANFE works closely with MYEOS and is often regarded as its NGO arm. While it secures most of its funding from the government, most of the funds are used for financing workshops in schools and for its members. As related by two senior government officials, who were also members of FANFE, it was through the recommendations of FANFE and its work in the community that financial support was given by MYEOS to Dakua School to establish their school canteen, as the community had no consumer shop.

KANA (means to eat) is another NGO which assisted two of the schools in their nutrition programmes, through conducting seminars and assisting teachers and community members to understand the importance of good nutrition for students and families.

Financial Support

From documentary sources (and confirmed by some government officials) financial assistance was allocated to Damanu, Vesi, and Dakua schools to assist in their programmes and projects. This study was unable to determine the actual amount allocated to each school, because of the lack of proper records in schools and also the inadequacy of this specific information on their documentary sources.

However, the government officer responsible for NFE in schools indicated that Vesi School, where the programme had ceased, received over F\$90,000 in materials and monetary assistance from various organisations between the period of 1985 to 1989. Damanu School had received about F\$20,000 between 1990 and 1992 while Dakua F\$ 10,000 between 1990 and 1992.

Financial assistance was also given by KANA to Damanu and Vesi to assist their programmes. As already indicated, because of the absence of records the actual amount could not be substantiated.

Some teachers and community members at Vesi school mentioned that carpentry tools, and other valuable materials donated by the government were transferred with the headteacher when he left the school. Concern was expressed by some assistant headteachers and some community members over the mismanagement of funds and materials granted to the schools. For example, most of the community members at Vesi School expressed their disappointment at not being informed of the utilisation of either funds raised communally to assist the school or those granted from the government.

The use of schools in terms of their facilities, personnel and location as a co-ordinating centre for community members by the school and other development agencies was well supported by all the groups, government officials, headteachers, some assistant headteachers, community members and key persons. The available resources in the community were better utilised, enhancing their value to the local communities. Confidence and self-worth were restored and retained among local experienced people who were used as resources. In communities where primary-school-based NFE programmes existed, agencies co-operated and shared resources, thus enhancing inter-agency co-ordination and minimising overlapping of programmes and competition among them.

The study found that facilities and human resources existed in the local communities and that these were supplemented by outside personnel, monetary and material resources from various agencies. But it was also found that the proper management of resources was an important issue in most schools. The lack of records and proper maintenance of equipment and materials may be the result of inadequate skills and knowledge of resource management on the part of most headteachers and inadequate local supervision. Accountability to the community as well as to the various donor agencies with respect of the use of resources, particularly finance, was found to be a problem in all schools. Resource management knowledge and skills in NFE programming were found to be an area lacking in most schools, and which may be a need area to be addressed in the education and training for co-ordinators in NFE.

8.10 Summary of Findings

The findings of the field research undertaken in the five schools selected as case studies and other sources have been discussed in this chapter.

The gathering of data was based on the research framework of the study. Data are presented in relation to themes which relate to the key questions of the study. Those key questions were on the ideal key features of NFE and their analysis in relation to practice. The discrepancies were interpreted using contextual information from the field.

The first theme was the concept of NFE. It was found that variations in interpretations of the concept were influenced by experience, exposure to NFE workshops and seminars, and proximity to cities and towns in terms of regular contact with information and development agents. Those persons who were more exposed to a variety of views on NFE had broader perspectives of NFE than those who had not benefited from such exposure

For most respondents the initial concept of NFE was not so much what NFE is - the definition - but its purposes. Therefore, for most respondents their perceptions were based on either the potential of NFE in terms of its benefit or its benefit in terms of the current primary-school-based NFE activities. However, it was revealed that exposure to workshops and various views of NFE had broadened understanding of the concept of NFE in some respondents. For those who had had such exposure, NFE was defined broadly and its purposes were in terms of all the groups in the communities and their needs; it was also confined to

school, but could take place in the community and can achieve a variety of purposes. It was ascertained that to enable the stakeholders in NFE, which include government officials, headteachers, teachers and community members, to have a broader understanding of the concept and processes of NFE, education and training are perceived to be crucial.

Planning and decision making in NFE constituted the second theme. It was revealed that, in schools with existing programmes, initiation was made by the headteachers with assistance from outside facilitators. In some schools where the programmes were sustained, there was evidence of some involvement and participation of community members in some stages of the programme. For example, most community members in the three schools with sustained programmes participated in the workshops to identify their learning needs. For most schools, once the programmes were implemented the headteachers did not perceive the need for regular dialogue and discussions to identify strengths and problems. Conversely, in schools where there was hardly any involvement and participation of the community members in decisions, there was confusion during implementation stage and programmes were not sustained when headteachers moved.

The importance of involvement and participation of the community members in every stage of NFE programmes, from initiation to follow-up, is substantiated. Planning and decision making for NFE programmes involve the processes of participation and collaboration between the facilitator/co-ordinator and community members on the basis of shared responsibility.

For participants in NFE programmes, group participation was emphasised. Those considered to be 'disadvantaged', for example parents and youths, were primarily the target. In the Indigenous communities, all the subgroups (which included the women, youths, students and parents) participated, whilst among the Indo Fijians only the adult groups and the youths did so. This participation reflected the cultural context, the roles played by parents and the emphasis the two racial groups placed on formal education. For the Indo Fijians, once the parents were educated, their influence would benefit their children. Indigenous Fijians emphasise the participation and learning of all the subgroups in NFE programmes to enhance their group roles. It was found that some participated in NFE programmes because of their commitment to authority and community, others because they did not want to 'lose face' and some were genuinely interested and wanted to support the school and to learn. The importance of understanding the rationale for participation in each case was found to be an important issue in all schools. It is recognised and substantiated that everyone is a potential participant. However, as a distinguished key person stated, "this potential can only be realised if community members understood the rationale of individual and groups participation in connection with their needs."

For the identification of needs, the role of the facilitator was emphasised in setting up the structure and processes to enable needs identification to occur. The facilitators were the headteachers supported by some government officials. In some schools, community members participated in the awareness workshops and discussions to identify their needs, but their participation lapsed during the implementation stages.

There were some projects established by headteachers and perceived as demonstration projects for children, youths and community members. But community members claimed they were not consulted and did not participate in their processes. As a result, they claimed the irrelevance of such projects to their needs. But for some programmes the community members participated in the initiation and implementation processes and there were small committees set up for the programmes. However, the study identified the lack of ongoing dialogue and, in some cases, the discontinued participation of the community in some programmes resulted in problems and conflicts. The emphasis was on the acquisition of skills. This may be interpreted as being caused by the inadequate knowledge on the part of most headteachers as to the concept, processes and diversity of NFE.

In the process of need identification, not only must the community members be involved and participate, they must understand every stage of their participation. This is why it is imperative that the facilitator understands the process and explains each step clearly to the participants. Explanation of each step followed by actual participation are considered vital to the process of identification of needs in NFE.

The content of NFE programmes was claimed by most headteachers and some government officials to be based on the needs identified through community workshops and surveys. It was found that, in most schools, the formulation of content for programmes and activities was based on both the needs generated by the community and those perceived by the school and government officials relevant to community living and rural livelihood. Most of these perceived needs were related to national goals and objectives. Content and activities of programmes ranged from literacy, parents education and youth activities, to health and

nutrition. There were no record to show the contents and activities in NFE programmes undertaken in schools. The lack of records was common in most schools.

Content formulation required the participation of community members. Although they were not aware of some of the potential content, it was important that there was some discussion and awareness of the importance of some learning content. To enable this to happen community members participated in discussions and workshops to identify their needs. Needs identified were formulated into learning content of NFE programmes. Content which government officials and headteachers perceived as important to individual and community living were also integrated into the programmes. However, as mentioned above that the records of content and activities of NFE programmes was found lacking in most schools.

Various instructional methods, which involved the participation of the community members and which were relevant to the culture of this study were used by most schools.

Group processes, teaching aids and demonstration projects were used in school-based programmes and connected with the whole process of facilitation, initiation and implementation. In some schools, some methods were used to attain short term objectives at the school. But they were not perceived to be used in the communities. For example, the poultry farm at Dakua School was meant as a demonstration method to be emulated by youths, children and community members, but there was no evidence of initiatives undertaken in the community as follow-up. However, generally some of the methods and activities used did induce some involvement, participation and co-operation of participants and

outside agents for school-based NFE. Indigenous methods and strategies were not widely used in schools.

The organisation and management of NFE programmes were not clearly defined because NFE was not an established system. At the national level, the confusion as to which authority was best suited to organise and manage the programme was related to the lack of conceptual understanding of NFE and its various purposes by the decision makers.

The study revealed that primary-school-based NFE programmes were first established within the development section of the Ministry of Education, and that the primary targets were parents. However, since then the Adult and Community Education Unit has been shifted to the MYEOS as it was perceived by decision makers that the concept of NFE encompasses the out-of-school population. It is evident that the organisation and operation of NFE is very much based on the perception of people as to the concept of NFE. Most informants suggested that NFE should be organised and managed at the national level within the MEWCST.

At the Divisional Level the importance of support of the DEO, SEOP and the other government officers in the education office was crucial, as they provided regular contact and support in schools for NFE programmes. It was found that those officers who had been exposed to the concept of NFE, and were interested supported these programmes. While generally most of the education officials in the division supported the concept, the lack of clear policy and strategies for its implementation, and the confusion over which authority is responsible for follow-up in

schools, has resulted in a lack of support. Some of them do not have informed knowledge and clear understanding of the concept of NFE.

At the divisional level, there were other agencies, both GO and NGO which supported the concept of primary-school-based NFE and had demonstrated this by supporting the programmes. The school was perceived by most GO and NGO representatives as offering the potential as one of the community based institutions to be used as a co-ordinating centre for NFE programmes.

At the school level, the headteacher in most cases made decisions in terms of organisation and management. Where there was token involvement and participation in the implementation stage, there was lack of awareness and confusion among the staff and community members about the processes and the rationale of NFE. In schools where headteachers had enabled the staff and community members to participate, and committees were formed to undertake responsibilities, there was some co-operation and support among the participants.

However, the lack of ongoing dialogue after the implementation stage was identified resulting in the lapsing of some activities within the programme. In all schools, there were no mechanisms or structures for the organisation and management of NFE programmes.

It was revealed that local and outside resources (which included personnel/advice, facilities and finance) were identified and mobilised to support primary-school-based programmes. Local resources included school personnel and facilities, and experienced community members.

Outside resources were provided through GOs and NGOs in the form of advise through personnel and financial support. It was found that substantial outside resources in terms of material and monetary assistance had supplemented the local resources in three schools. However, the management of these resources and their accountability were found to be problematic in most schools. There were no records maintained and some teachers and community members expressed their concerns and disappointment about the manner in which the material and financial resources were managed.

Their concern highlighted the lack of skills and inadequate knowledge on the part of most headteachers as to the management of resources. It has be recognised that, to many people, particularly the headteachers and government officers concerned, NFE is a new concept and therefore a better understanding and acceptance of its processes is important to enable an effective management of human and financial resources used in NFE programmes.

CHAPTER 9

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

This chapter first discusses the key findings and implications emanating from the study in relation to the potential of primary-school-based NFE in Fiji. Recommendations are then identified and discussed, followed by suggested areas for further research and conclusions.

The major factors which led to the undertaking of this research were the lack of empirical knowledge and understanding of the concept of NFE and of the potential of primary-school-based NFE programmes in Fiji. While NFE programmes had operated in some schools, there were limitations in the conceptual understanding of NFE and strategies of effective implementation of the concept. Thus, the study was undertaken to examine the NFE programmes in selected schools; some schools which were still operating programmes while some had ceased to function. Through the study's findings the potential for primary-school-based NFE in Fiji was ascertained.

9.2 Implications From the Study

The implications emerging from the study are rooted in the professional, political, social, personal and administrative endeavours in which schools operate. Either individually, in isolation, or in combination with others, each implication achieved prominence and attention in one forum or another. The first listed here are those relating

to concept of primary-school-based NFE. Secondly, there are implications for the structure of provision at various level, the school, divisional and national. There are also listed implications for curriculum content and the delivery strategies. Finally, there are identified implication with regards to resources and their management. All these implications are considered significant in relation to the potential of primary- school-based NFE programmes.

9.2.1 Implications for a Concept of School-Based NFE

While the concept of NFE in operation apparently differed in the selected schools, overall, a concept of primary-school-based NFE and its potential seemed to be accepted and supported by most respondents.

A number of general statements emanating from the study regarding concept of NFE can be made. These comments reflect the practical considerations that arose from the operation of primary-school-based NFE in relation to the cultural context and the ideal concept developed to understand discrepancies between the ideal and practice.

As the ideal concept suggests that NFE is an organised educational activity, deliberately planned and facilitated to meet specific purposes in a cultural context. In terms of purpose it can either be used to bring change or to maintain values. As a system it has special features which can be contrasted with formal education and can act an alternative, complement or supplement to the established formal system.

The concept of NFE in this study was found to be primarily related to its immediate purposes and benefits to the school and the communities. This reflected the cultural context where actions have more credibility than abstract processes. When personnel and community members

participate in NFE workshops, discussions and training, their perspectives can be broadened. This was revealed in the study that, as community members became exposed to different concepts and purposes they were able to determine the most appropriate programmes in relation to their needs and cultural contexts. Therefore, as the concept of NFE is broad and has a variety of purposes, a generic concept of NFE is suggested for primary-school-based NFE programmes in Fiji. A generic concept allows for the diversity of cultures, the social, economic and political contexts in Fiji.

The concept embraces NFE as an organised educational activity, jointly planned, organised and implemented by the facilitators and community members to determine the most appropriate programmes to meet specific purposes in a cultural context. In terms of purpose it can either be used to bring change or to maintain values. As a system it has special features which can be contrasted with formal education and can act an alternative, complement or supplement to the established formal system. In this process the mobilisation of local resources and the co-operation of all concerned are considered important.

There are several factors that influence the specific orientation of the general concept. Each school requires its own plan initiated by the headteachers in co-operation with the community members. The variations that make it unreasonable to suggest a concept suited to all include; the location, the cultural base, varying level of resources, the size of the school, the needs in relation to the target groups and the different stages of understanding of the processes involved by the headteachers and community members. For example in relation to location, the schools in the rural areas may focus on the available resources such as timber and land and develop skills in agriculture, craft, poultry, pig, or

goat farming and also programmes in nutrition, sanitation and health, which enhance the quality of life in the rural areas. Schools near the towns or city may be more involved in offering programmes for self-employable skills and discussion of issues and problems such as consumer issues and budgetting which are related to urban living.

The motivation in the various cultural groups in Fiji is important as it would determine the direction of the target groups' needs and how NFE would respond. For example, an Indo-Fijian schools may be more inclined to support income generation projects than communal oriented programmes.

The size of the school in relation to facilities and personnel may also determine the NFE activities offered.

In most schools, NFE programmes were found to be ad hoc and lacking in the necessary structure and strategies for their effective implementation. Most if not all the headteachers and some government officers who were considered in this study as facilitators and implementers, had limited knowledge and understanding of the processes of NFE to be effective in its implementation. Some perceived NFE to be confined within institutions and the fact that this study was focussed on schools highlighted this limited perception and conceptualization.

Those who perceived NFE as mainly training towards an alternative livelihood for the academically less inclined children at school, failed to realise that the existence of a dualist system within the school without a common goal would generate an attitude among the community that NFE was inferior to formal education. Besides, the support systems in the community for primary-school-based NFE

programmes were inadequate and children were not well placed to influence their elders. Where the concept of NFE was supported for the education of the various groups in the community, the importance of their roles and the fulfilment of these roles in relation to educational provision was recognised. But if they were to fulfil the five major roles and subsidiary roles suggested by Brennan (which includes the economic, familial, political, civic, cultural and educational role) then the fulfilment of these roles in relation to needs and problems cannot be addressed by unilateral action within the school. Multi-agency programmes and processes to achieve co-ordination and support would be necessary.

The concept of complementarity suggested by some individuals recognises the importance of mutual support between formal education and NFE in terms of mobilisation of personnel, physical facilities, administrative structures, curriculum and instructional materials, training of teachers and evaluation procedures existing within each mode. The development of a system to co-ordinate formal and non-formal learning to provide the appropriate responses to the communities' changing needs is crucial to primary-school-based NFE programmes. Therefore, if the rationale of primary-school-based NFE and its processes is to be more broadly understood by most involved in NFE, more suitable approaches need to be established.

It is imperative that such approaches be devised within relevant structures or processes to maximise understanding. Some support is already visible, but it is limited. Total commitment to the concept is crucial and this can occur through an understanding of NFE's variety of purposes and potential role in the community and the nation. Commitment to the concept by the stakeholders is important. The stakeholders include government policy and decision makers in education

and other areas, divisional and senior education officers, headteachers, teachers, school committees, community groups and also NGOs.

It was found in this study that those individuals whose perceptions of NFE were much broader were those who had had a wide exposure through seminars, workshops and to readings to NFE serving various purposes. Therefore, an important approach would be induction and training for NFE at various levels. At the national level, training for senior government officers responsible for policy and decision making, is essential and should enable them to be aware of the various concepts and processes of NFE and its role in the communities and for the nation. It is anticipated that through such education and training they would have a clearer concept of NFE and thus be in a position to formulate appropriate policies and strategies. Facilitators and implementers of NFE, NGO members, teachers and community members should also be trained to enable them to understand the concept and processes of NFE and its potential in schools, their leadership role and how the operation of NFE in schools could effect changes in the school and in the community. It is anticipated that awareness raising through various means, particularly in groups, will assist in legitimating the process in sharing and developing of the concept and in enhancing the activities involved.

An important aspect in these awareness workshops and training is the role of the facilitator(s) in conducting the training. For senior government officers at the national level, this would be best done by an experienced consultant with extensive academic and practical knowledge of NFE. The training should include discussion of various concepts of NFE, policy issues, identification of needs and formulation of content, planning and decision making, organisation and management of programmes and management of resources. Participatory approaches to

workshops and training are essential so that the participants understand the processes involved in facilitation. Once the senior officers are trained and understand the process, they in turn would train the officers at the divisional level. These officers would then train the headteachers, teachers and other community workers involved at the community level.

Pre-service training is also required for school teachers and extension workers in various ministries. Training institutions, for example, Teachers' Colleges and Co-operative Training Institutes should offer, as part of the curriculum content, studies in adult, non-formal and community education. The co-operation of such training institutions with the regional as well as overseas universities in this area of training is essential.

Another important approach related to the raising of awareness and relevant to the cultural context of this study is the use of programmes and demonstration projects as vehicles for learning. Demonstration projects that had been tried in cases studied were often deemed irrelevant by the community members because they had not understood their purposes. It is important therefore to have thorough discussions with community members and potential participants before programmes are implemented. Theoretical or abstract discussions must be followed by concrete experiences to assist the development of an understanding among the participants of the processes and outcomes involved in NFE programmes. Practical programmes where the participants are involved can be used as case studies, showing the various stages of the programmes from initiation through implementation and evaluation, to follow-up. Each process must be explained clearly to the participants, but their practical participation re-enforces their conceptual understanding. As evident

from the study, both the conceptual and the practical training are important to an understanding of the NFE concept and its processes.

9.2.2 Implications For Structure of Provision

The organisation and management of NFE in all schools as ascertained in this study were not well defined. The limitation of the current concept of school-based NFE has resulted in what is recognised as an inadequate policy statement and which does not reflect the potential of NFE and primary-school-based programmes.

There are no clear strategies for action. As a result, the current NFE programmes that are provided in primary schools are ad hoc, fragmented and unco-ordinated. The current structure of provision relies on the interests, motivation and leadership of the headteachers at the school level, with the support of other government and non-government officers. But motivation and enthusiasm without understanding of NFE principles and processes has resulted in ineffective implementation of NFE programmes in some schools. While official recognition and inter-agency support has been given to primary-school-based programmes, the necessary structure for effective implementation of NFE programmes are lacking.

NFE as a system is one of the perspectives ascertained from literature in this study that has potential for primary-school-based NFE programmes. This does not imply the creation of large bureaucracies or expensive equipped institutions, but the focus on a structure which organises, manages and facilitates learning.

System-based NFE would mean what Chin and Benne (1976) termed the normative re-educative strategy for change using the government's authority to institute change. But where the normative re-educative approach was used the motive force was primarily the government's authority and professionals' enthusiasm, without the commitment and participation of those involved at the community level. On the other hand, the rational empirical approach would involve the people taking the initiative to institute change. This second approach involves starting 'from below' but lacking infrastructural support. Both approaches have their own deficiencies.

However, for NFE to operate as a system would require the combination of these two approaches where the organisation and management of provision must be able to respond and accommodate unique geographical and cultural differences. What is required is the collaboration between the facilitators and community members or participants in NFE to participate in decisions which affect them. This combined approach addresses not only political questions but also practical questions of programme development.

As determined from the literature, at the national level the co-ordinating machinery most likely to be successful is a structure that is an extension of the government's own administration because of the importance of the role of governments and its authority for the people. In Fiji, government contributes a crucial role in the national development and therefore it is essential that whatever programmes are instituted in the system have its support. From the field data, the Ministry of Education, Women, Culture, Science and Technology is perceived to be the appropriate co-ordinating ministry because of its structure in the divisions and the links with the schools. However, as mentioned above,

the needs in response to the various roles in the community cannot be solved by the education sector alone, as all the relevant GOs and NGOs involved in NFE are required to collaborate in terms of personnel and resources. It is important that clear policies and strategies are required to establish the framework for NFE and primary-school-based programmes as well as directing the inter-agency co-operation. It is important that policy ensures the provision of resources by government in terms of personnel and facilities so that, for example, schools are available for NFE activities when they are not being used for their primary purpose.

Setting up a national machinery does not guarantee effectiveness. In planning and decision making in NFE the issue of participation is emphasised in the concept of NFE. From this study it is identified that in planning and decision making the change agents or facilitators and participants should collaborate in decisions pertaining to every stage of the programme. It is important that there should be a means at every level for the various bodies to come together to plan and decide on issues and programmes. A National Council or Committee with representatives from GOs, NGOs, local authorities, the university, the public and the consumers of NFE is required. Membership should be confined to central government and regional or divisional heads as the size has to be kept within bounds. However, the committee must have legal powers to maintain the dynamism and interests of its tasks.

Such a co-ordinated approach would enable government to plan action on an inter-ministerial basis, requiring each Ministry to comply with what is planned. Furthermore, for NFE to be coherent and to act in the best interests of the nation and the people, it is essential that an officer within each ministry be appointed to liaise with local communities.

At the Divisional Level the various arms of government, central and local, meet and effect the transference of ideas from policy to action. At this level a number of agencies including provincial councils can be represented and thus benefit from local knowledge not reflected at the national level. It is through this divisional committee that the national body is able to gain insight into the problems, needs and issues from those working in NFE. Policy decisions and strategies are then based on what is and not on what is assumed to be. The 'upward' and 'downward' flow of ideas between the regional and central government are crucial if NFE is to be maintained within the government policy as well as to retain its relevance to the local community and participants.

The nature of involvement of community members in NFE planning in the study was seen to vary in each school. Planning and decision making in NFE programmes is a process of participation and collaboration involving the participants and facilitators on the basis of shared responsibility. However, it was found that consistent participation from initiation of programmes to evaluation was found to be lacking in most school.

Collaborative planning between the facilitator and community members or participants in NFE programmes is essential. This involves an acceptance between the facilitator and participants as partners with equal power and control deciding the learning needs and strategies for effective outcomes. For this to occur, it is necessary that appropriate strategies are developed. This involves the development of relevant structures or expediting certain strategies to legitimise mechanisms of collaborative planning.

At the community level, if NFE is to make its desired impact, it is important that the primary school is formally recognised as one of the co-ordinating bases in the community. However, it is important to start with 'pilot' or 'innovative school' based on the interest and commitment of teachers and community members. It is from those schools that needs, problems and issues could emerge which would be the basis for determining policies and strategies for the national, divisional, provincial and district contexts.

As a base the school identifies needs, problems and issues of the community as well as facilitating their immediate solution. The careful formation of NFE committees may ensure that decisions concerning individual and community needs are made by the people so that they understand the processes and are empowered to take leadership and responsibility and to claim ownership of the programmes. However, it is important that collaborative planning and decision making among the teachers, other GOs and NGOs and community members in every stage of the programme is made for mutual agreed purposes.

The need for a full-time co-ordinator for NFE at the school level is important and was identified from field data. The headteacher is suggested as the most appropriate because of his/her leadership role at the school and also because of the perception of authority in the community. Community members would respect and listened to the headteacher rather than to any other teachers. However, as most headteachers also teach, if they were to undertake this responsibility then it is important, that they are not only involved in administrative tasks but spend some of their time in consulting and advising community members as well as facilitating and organising school-based NFE.

Remuneration for the undertaking of the task would be an incentive to be involved.

9.2.3 **Implications For Curriculum Content**

The curriculum content and its formulation varied in the schools studied. These variations are explained by different target groups, the nature of needs and the process of their formulation. In most schools the nature of needs addressed were mostly felt or expressed need related to immediate material benefits.

Their normative needs which were mainly educational were perceived by the headteachers or government officers as required by the community, for example good nutrition was often not a need by the community, but nevertheless included in the content because experts considered nutrition important.

Curriculum emerged as being properly based on the individual and community needs of the potential participants. The formulation of the curriculum should involve consultation and negotiation between the facilitators and the community members in relation to needs, target groups and available resources. Some of the schools that were studied developed content that was based on assumed needs, the addressing of which was perceived to be beneficial to the participants. The community members were not consulted and they did not understand the processes involved in the establishment of programmes or their purposes. The programmes had failed as it did not sustain their interest and their support. It is therefore important that relevant strategies are determined in the community for the identification of needs and the subsequent formulation of these needs into curriculum content.

NFE as a Process is an important perspective identified from literature. It has potential for primary-school-based programmes in terms of relevance of needs and subsequent curriculum content. As a process, the participation of the community members in the programming, from identification of needs, through the formulation of curriculum content and its implementation, to evaluation and follow-up is crucial. Participation is recognised and valued by people who are capable of taking responsibility for their own learning. As a process, the importance of group participation through various means such as workshops or discussion groups, is recognised.

Group participation is acknowledged in this study as being appropriate in the cultural context because it enables the sharing of ideas and learning with each other, promoting self-confidence, growth and co-operation among the participants. Although group consensus is always sought, individuality is enhanced. The importance of in-depth discussions to understand problems and causes through a process of 'praxis' advocated by Freire (1972), as well as demonstrations of learning experiences through practical projects and programmes is evident. Critical analysis of local situations should enable participants to understand their needs through conceptual as well as concrete experiences.

Flexibility in the process is crucial, as it allows each school to build on its own strengths and begin with any group be they children at school, youths or adult groups. However, it is important that there is a clear understanding by the participating group of the appropriate processes and that they are involved in the decisions and planning to determine content or subject matter.

The role of the facilitator in enabling these processes to occur is identified in this study as vital. The facilitator(s) would be involved in setting the structure, creating the learning climate and providing some activities to enable the community members to identify their needs and problems. Facilitation is ensuring that community members are involved and participate in the process. Because of the culture and approach taken by some change agents, community members may be initially reluctant to identify their own needs and problems. They depend upon authority to make decisions for them in starting development projects. Therefore, it is important that they are involved and participate in the process of NFE, from the identification of needs and resources, formulation to content, implementation, evaluation and follow-up.

9.2.4 Implications For Delivery Strategies

As ascertained from the data in this study an informal and less structured learning climate is important in the delivery of NFE programmes.

NFE as a setting is a perspective identified in this study emphasising flexibility and a less formal environment of learning. An important consideration in the delivery strategies of NFE is the teaching and learning setting which is required to portray friendliness, warmth, flexibility as well as to maximise participation. The relationship between the teachers and community members would be that of a partnership where both teach and learn from each other. This is important in the cultural context where authority figure are often perceived by community members to have all the knowledge and answers to their problems.

NFE as a setting emphasises that the learning activities are undertaken in co-operation with GOs and NGOs, teachers and experienced community members who utilise a variety of teaching methods which involve the participation of the learners. It recognises and legitimizes the worth of indigenous or local experiences, skills and techniques of teaching and learning.

9.2.5 Implications For Resources

As NFE is not an established system, the identification, mobilisation and utilisation of both local and external resources for NFE in primary-school-based programmes has depended on the abilities and skills of the headteachers in soliciting support. Local resources in terms of personnel, facilities and materials already existed and were identified, mobilised and utilised in NFE programmes. However, most schools required and benefitted from external resources in terms of personnel/advice, materials and finance. But the ad hoc arrangements of NFE programmes in schools and lack of knowledge and skills by the headteachers in the management of these resources resulted in mismanagement by some headteachers. The establishment of NFE as a system would ensure that NFE received an appropriate share of the national budget and that both human and financial resources are allocated to support primary-school-based NFE programmes. It would also ensure that, at the various levels, strategies are developed for resource identification, mobilisation and management. It is not only the management of resources but the identification of the best possible resources for the programmes that are important. The isolation of some communities creates difficulties as there are no alternative resources, so whatever is available is used. But in some cases all possible or potential resources have not been identified,

so that the best is not utilised for NFE programmes. Again the importance of education and training for headteachers, for GO and NGO representatives to understand the processes involved in the identification of resources and their management is imperative.

For the potential of primary-school-based NFE programmes to be realised would need arrangements authorised and supported by government which clearly bring together into focus the following perspectives:

- (i) the legitimisation of the structures and strategies at the various levels - national, divisional and school or community ;
- (ii) appropriate planning and decision making procedures;
- (iii) the appropriate planning, reviewing, evaluation and processes;
- (iv) the role of NFE in primary school in relation to responding and accommodating contemporary problems and needs in the community;
- (v) the services and materials which are required to support schools (e.g. consultancy, in-service education etc);
- (vi) the supply and support of resources (personnel, finance and facilities) which the system has available;
- (vii) the roles to be played by headteachers, teachers, officers in the division and agencies, inclusive of the re-requisite training and induction programmes, necessary to familiarise individuals and groups with their respective roles.

Appropriate arrangements will need to recognise the latent interest and commitment for NFE which was found to exist at a variety of organisational levels and with a cross section of agencies and groups.

9.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are presented in relation to the followings:

9.3.1 Recommendation for Planning and Decision Making Structure

Initially, the government should formulate clear policies for NFE which relate to its social, economic and cultural objectives and should identify broad goals and strategies for their implementation, taking into consideration the country's cultural diversity. In so doing, formal structures, roles and relationships should be clarified and restated. A clarification of the responsibilities of the co-ordinating Ministry is important, and its relationship with other GOs and NGOs in the planning and development of primary-school-based NFE programmes at the national, divisional and community level needs to be clearly stated.

The establishment of an organisational and management mechanism at the national, divisional and local levels should enable joint planning and decision making where the providers as well as the consumers of NFE views are heard. These mechanisms should be under-pinned by legislation to ensure that whatever is agreed has legal sanction.

At the national level it is recommended that a national council be set up with membership from GOs, NGOs, university and local authorities to be responsible for national planning of NFE and inter-ministerial co-operation and support for school-based programmes.

At the divisional level a committee with membership from GOs, NGOs and provincial councils should meet and discuss policy in relation to action. Such a committee the national committee, would be able to solicit needs, problems and issues from those working in the NFE in schools and community and thus base its decisions on the real situations.

At the community level the formation of NFE committees with membership from the community should meet to discuss issues and problems concerning the community. But the committees to be assisted and advised by headteachers, teachers and other agency representatives who are community based.

It is from the community that the 'upward' thrust of needs and issues originates to determine appropriate policies and strategies for national, regional, provincial and school contexts. The importance of the 'upward' and 'downward' flow of ideas between the various levels is crucial if NFE is to be maintained within the bounds of national policy, while retaining its relevance to the target groups.

9.3.2 Recommendations at the System Level

It is recommended that the MECWST be recognised as the most appropriate co-ordinating Ministry as it has structures in divisions, districts and schools. The central bureaucracy in consultation with the national committee should develop broad NFE goals, based on policy directions and should deploy the services and resources which are required to support NFE in schools. This should include staffing, advisory support, teacher replacement and remuneration funds. There is also the responsibility to ensure that support given to the schools

encourages them to respond to the needs and problems of their communities.

The importance of education and training for all those involved with NFE at various levels was identified in this study. The MEWCST should collaborate with agencies, as well as existing training institutions, local, regional and international, for the education and training of headteachers and teachers in NFE, so that they have a broader understanding of the concept of NFE and its processes. Headteachers, who are to be co-ordinators, would require a re-orientation or induction training workshop organised by FANFE in collaboration with the MEWCST, to be undertaken in the community where school-based NFE is to operate. This would enable them not only to understand the concept of NFE, but also the processes involved in implementation. The same training processes should also be organised for teachers in selected 'pilot schools'.

The role of the headteacher as a co-ordinator of NFE in schools should be specified, particularly as it relates to the facilitation of the collaborative and participatory planning and decision making process with community members and representatives of other agencies.

The teacher-training colleges should also offer courses on NFE for teacher trainees, so that when they join the school system they are aware of and understand the concept and processes involved. In terms of curriculum content of NFE courses, assistance and collaboration should be sought from the University of the South Pacific and other relevant universities which offer courses in NFE.

The ministry should also encourage and support academic training for potential officers at various levels to enable a cadre of NFE workers who have the necessary theoretical as well as the practical understanding. Such training could be undertaken at the University of the South Pacific or relevant overseas universities.

9.3.3 Recommendations at the School Level

In the course of this study, it has been identified that there are differences in the interpretation of NFE concept. The interpretations are in relation to the perception of the function of NFE in schools. It is therefore recommended that, initially, 'pilot schools' based on the interests of the headteachers currently involved in NFE be selected and formalised with structures and procedures.

It is important that each school develops its own programme according to the location, cultural base, the resources, the size of the school and the needs of the target population. The purpose as well as the process of NFE have to be the basis on which collaboration is forged between the headteachers and the community in the identification of needs, the formulation of content, programme implementation and evaluative follow up. The key characteristics of school-based NFE have to be flexibility, accessibility, relevance and inter-agency co-operation.

At the school level, the co-ordination of various agencies to support school-based NFE would require flexibility in the approaches adopted. The teaching and learning situations in the school should ensure maximum participation through the use of a variety of methods. Group processes, practical demonstrations and material aids support are

important methods which should be used to enhance participation and greater understanding.

The use of local resources - experienced community members, facilities and materials - should be encouraged, identified and supported to foster a sense of value, pride and faith among the community members. Where external resources are requested, in the form of finance, personnel and material, it is important that all the groups involved in primary-school-based programmes are aware and involved in decisions about their utilisation and management. Proper management and maintenance of facilities, materials and finance is the responsibility of the co-ordinator, who should also keep proper and up-to-date records of programmes and resources used. These records should be accessible and made available to the community and concerned agencies.

The practical proposals which have been outlined in this Chapter have emerged from a desire to acknowledge, co-ordinate and legitimate the various ad hoc efforts on primary-school-based NFE programmes. They have been formulated to enhance the potential, and hence the effectiveness, of NFE at the school level, while ensuring that government commitment to the concept are communicated and actively pursued throughout the system.

9.3.4 Further Research

The recommendations and practical proposals which have been offered cannot address all the issues which have arisen in the course of this study. For example, arising from the findings is the most heralded social objective of community involvement and participation. The question is whether the combination of the normative-educative approach

with the rational-empirical approach resulted in greater equality between the facilitator and community members. The result was confusion as to who had authority and power and this affected in the processes and outcomes. The study did not attempt to examine this issue and would be an interesting area for further research.

There was a belief held by some individuals in authority that many persons in the community had limited perceptions in terms of needs and issues relating to their well being, and that therefore they had to be told. Some community members deferred to the authorities' expertise while others believed community members were the experts in the knowledge of community and their needs. The effect of parochial attitudes, limited expectations and the lack of skills required for the collaborative and participatory decision making; or the capacity and inclination of community members to participate with professionals or authority in NFE programmes was not fully explored and would be an engaging topic for study.

Further to the above, a study to determine how the participatory process of decentralised decision making at the community level affects the decisions at the central system of decision making. Another area which was not fully explored in this study but found to be important was inter-agency co-ordination in NFE and primary-school based-programmes. The questions that may be raised include:

- (i) What type of co-ordination and collaboration is required, taking into consideration the autonomy most agencies have, particularly NGOs?
- (ii) Would the establishment of a co-ordinating mechanism guarantee effective operation in primary-school-based NFE programmes?

- (iii) Finally a follow up study could be made to determine the developments and growth of school-based NFE programmes after a period of three or four years. Such a study could ascertain whether any changes in structure, processes and setting had occurred following this research.

9.4 Conclusions

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the potential of primary-school-based NFE programmes in Fiji. To this end, an ideal model of NFE was constructed. The key features of the model were operationally defined that were the basis against which practice represented in the data collected was assessed. The gathering of the data was based on the research framework of the study.

The discrepancies between practice and the ideal was identified by bringing together data gathered by way of secondary sources files and statements from government officials, opinions collected by interviews and workshops and impressions gained through the visit to the schools and communities. These findings were validated against data collected from key persons. The discrepancies were interpreted using contextual information from the field.

The major conclusions of the study may be summarised as follows:

1. The concept of NFE in operation differed in the selected schools. The variations in interpretations of the concept were influenced by experience, exposure to NFE workshops and seminars and proximity to cities and towns in terms of regular contact with information and development agents. Persons who were more exposed to

- a variety of views of NFE had broader perspectives of NFE than those who had not benefited from such exposure.
2. As community members became exposed to different concepts and purposes, they were able to determine the most appropriate programmes in relation to their needs and cultural contexts. As the concept of NFE is broad and has a variety of purposes, a generic concept of NFE is suggested for primary-school-based NFE in Fiji. A generic concept allows for the diversity of cultures, the social, economic and political contexts in Fiji.
 3. Given the cultural diversity, the socio-economic, political contexts and other related factors, it is found to be necessary in this study that each school should develop its own programmes according to location, cultural base, the resources available, the size of the school and the needs of the target population.
 4. The importance of involvement and participation of the community members in every stage of NFE programming, from initiation to follow-up was found to be vital. The success of NFE programmes depended on the participation and collaboration between the facilitator/coordinator and community members in the processes of planning and decision making.
 5. Found to be important is the establishment of an organisational and management mechanism at the national, divisional and local levels to enable joint planning and decision making where the providers as well as the consumers of NFE views are heard. The mechanism should be underpinned by legislation to ensure that whatever is agreed has legal sanctions.
 6. The importance of education and training of personnel involved with NFE at various levels was found important in this study.

7. The potential of primary-school-based NFE in Fiji has been ascertained. The legitimation of the structure and processes at various levels - national, divisional and school or community was judged to be required to enhance the realisation of the potential of primary-school-based NFE programmes in Fiji.