

PaciNet Conference 2006

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Many thanks to PIP for awarding the Ministry of Education, Cook Islands a fellowship for a person to attend the PaciNet conference in Samoa. This has been a great opportunity for the Cook Islands and for me, in my work, has come at a very good time as I am writing the policy for ICT in education for the Cook Islands. The information that I gathered at the Conference and the contacts that I have made will be highly useful in developing our long-term education strategies.

Things learned:

- The size and scope of the internet
- About some technologies that I previously had no knowledge and/or understanding about such as VOIP, wireless networks, internet addresses and blogging.
- The potential there is for the Cook Islands in the future use of the internet and particularly for education
- What is happening in ITC in general and ITC in education in Samoa and other Pacific countries
- That there are possibilities to achieve some of the measures that we wish to achieve in Cook Islands schools with the technology that is available now
- That the benefits of sharing information and participating in a regional approach to access problems are significant
- That there are people championing the cause of ICT development in the Pacific and what they have been doing
- That there are people and organisations available and willing to help us to find solutions to our specific problems/issues

What I can do with this is:

- Enrich the policy dialogue in the Cook Islands with respect to the use of internet and ICT, particularly in the education sector
- Share the conference papers with my colleagues at the Ministry of Education and in other government departments
- Share dialogue about the conference, PICISOC, PIP and ICT with my colleagues
- Incorporate what I have learned into the education sector's policy statements on ICT, Curriculum, School Based Learning, Infrastructure and Distance Learning
- Tap into the PICISOC network for expert advice and help on technical matters when developing ITC and Distance Learning strategic planning for the Ministry of Education and the education sector
- Become a member of PICISOC (done) join a special interest group (done -the constitution review group) and become a liaison person to provide

information from the Cook Islands (done! – information will start to flow as soon as we return home)

- Apply some of the technical information I have learned to use my own PC at home and my PC at work more efficiently

In addition the people of Samoa, our hosts, were warm and hospitable. Thanks to PIP for the opportunity to attend the conference, make the connections and learn so much as well as to see just a little of this beautiful Pacific Island country.