The Community Education Training Centre played a very special role in Pacific development over five decades, from its founding in 1963 to its closure in 2013. Through its unique training programme for women, the Centre nurtured and developed the skills and leadership qualities of over 1,200 women, equipping them as agents of change at the grassroots level. After completing the residential community development course, the women took up diverse challenges, sharing their skills and empowering others within their communities and beyond. Against a backdrop of rapid change within the region, not least in terms of the role of women, the Centre’s staff assured that the training programme kept up with constantly changing needs. The Centre’s second main course, the Business Development Advisory Programme which ran from the early 2000s, trained more than 500 women and men in the entrepreneurial skills demanded in the present day. This publication is a celebration of the women and men, the students and the staff, who passed through the Centre over these years and who contributed to the powerful force for change that the Centre represents.
Changing women, changing communities, changing the Pacific:

Five decades of SPC’s Community Education Training Centre

Compiled by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Contents

Chapter 1 – The Community Education Training Centre through the years  page 1
Chapter 2 – The staff: A dedicated and committed team  page 15
Chapter 3 – The students, and the student experience  page 23
Chapter 4 – The curricula  page 33
Chapter 5 – Partner organisations  page 47
Chapter 6 – Impacts and achievements  page 53

Gender violence studies (2012) with Fiji Women’s Rights trainer

Cover photo: (left to right) Fatua Fanoiga (Tuvalu), Madeleine Ehnyimane (New Caledonia), Seela Tanelua (Tuvalu) and Florine Vilvilamu (Vanuatu)
Foreword

In March 2013, SPC’s Community Education Training Centre opened the final year of its community development programme for Pacific women – a role it has proudly carried out for 50 years. In 2014, the programme will be offered by the University of the South Pacific.

This publication, *Changing women, changing communities, changing the Pacific*, tells an important story of visionary leadership and foresight, describing how SPC as a regional agency rose to meet the challenges and needs of the diverse communities of its members across the Pacific.

CETC’s calling was to be a ‘force de change’, with women as the catalyst and enablers of change. During 50 years of service to the region, more than 1700 women have graduated from CETC’s community development programme, all of whom have contributed to their respective communities. Hundreds of others have attended its shorter courses.

The title of this narrative reflects a story of change and of CETC’s role in inspiring individuals, families, communities and nations at different levels during 50 years. The army of women who have attended its flagship programme have led change in their communities and countries – change that has been supported by the hundreds of men and young people who also had the privilege of taking part in CETC’s various training programmes.

This book celebrates the legacy that CETC leaves to our region through a programme that has contributed tremendously to the development work of SPC. It is also a tribute to the women who came to CETC to further their ability to help their communities, the staff who gave so generously, and the families who had to deal with separation as students left home for the better part of a year.

In everything in life, there is a beginning and an end, but for CETC there is no ending, only transformation. Its mission will continue under the University of the South Pacific and its value will live on in those who have been empowered by its training over the years and the people around them who have benefited as a result.

SPC has been blessed in having CETC to provide its flagship programme in community development and we wish USP success in keeping the flag flying high for the future of our region.

I commend the publication to you and sincerely thank Anne Moorhead for dedicating expertise and time to researching and writing CETC’s story. I also thank all those who have contributed to the book through photographs and personal recollections.

Finally, congratulations to CETC on its golden jubilee. In saluting its achievements, I acknowledge Dr Lia Maka, current Head of CETC, for her leadership over the past few years and for instigating this record of CETC. I also thank Dr Maka’s predecessors and the current and former staff of CETC who have all contributed to what it stands for and will help to set the foundation for its future.

CETC’s legacy will live on through the lives and work of those it has empowered.


Dr Jimmie Rodgers
Director-General, Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Dedication

This book is dedicated to:

• all the principals, staff, ex-students and supporters who have helped create, shape and nurture this unique institution; and

• Marjorie Stewart, the founding director, for an enduring vision of development that has specifically addressed Pacific women’s needs over five decades.

Acknowledgments

The support of SPC member countries, development and implementing partners, and other SPC programmes, is gratefully acknowledged. CETC management and staff, Anne Moorhead and the SPC publications team worked together on the production of this book and made the process an enjoyable one.

Sewing machine maintenance course presented by external trainer, in 2012, and (right) in the 1980s
Changing women, changing communities, changing the Pacific: Five decades of SPC's CETC
Chapter 1

The Community Education Training Centre through the years

In September 1963 in Suva, Fiji, the Community Education Training Centre opened its doors for the first time. The first intake comprised twenty women students from rural communities across the Pacific, most of whom had never before left their islands. For the next eleven months the women shared a unique experience. Following a curriculum designed to improve well-being in rural Pacific communities, they learned about home management, healthy eating and basic family health. They learned how to make and use a smokeless stove, and to make clothes for their families. They developed their communication and leadership skills. And they learned about each other’s islands and customs and made lasting friendships. At the end of the eleven months they returned to their homes with a wealth of new knowledge and skills, ready to take on new roles within their communities and to begin building a foundation for change.

These were the first of 1,700 women who over the following five decades passed through the doors of the Centre and completed the annual community development training course. Initially a three-year project, the success of the programme and the importance of the Centre’s work turned it into one of the longest running programmes of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). In the later years, a further 500 women and men received training at the Centre under the additional Business Development Advisory Programme.

This is the story of the Community Education Training Centre, its role in empowering women and communities across the Pacific, and how it changed the women, their families and communities, and the Pacific region as a whole.
The origins of the Community Education Training Centre

The South Pacific Commission, now the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), was founded in 1947 by Australia, France, New Zealand, the Netherlands, the UK and the USA, to improve cooperation across the region and to promote development. By the early 1960s, SPC’s role was increasingly one of support for the national governments, many of which were working towards independence in the 1960s and 1970s. The South Pacific Conference, which steered the SPC agenda, set priority on education and training at its fifth meeting in 1962.

Around this time, the role of women in development was largely seen as an extension of their domestic role within the family and the community. The colonial administrations encouraged women to form groups or clubs, and various training courses were offered to these groups to ‘improve’ their home and village life. As part of this effort, in 1959 SPC appointed a Women’s Interests Officer, Miss Marjorie Stewart, “to assist existing organisations to develop their programmes and to encourage the further formation of women’s groups”.

Marjorie Stewart had a vision of women as powerful development agents, educated and empowered to support their communities through change. She set about turning her vision into reality. Touring the region to assess the needs of the women and communities, she realised that a central residential course was the most practical way to build the foundations for change at grassroots level.

The idea was enthusiastically supported by a Women’s Seminar organised by SPC in Samoa in 1961. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) was a keen partner from the beginning, offering expertise from its regional Home Economics Unit, while the Australian Committee of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign promised funding and the Government of Fiji offered a site and buildings.

The stage was set for the Community Education Training Centre and its doors opened in 1963, with Marjorie Stewart in the role of Director of the Centre.

“Classes opened on 23 September, 1963, and continued, with a short Christmas break, until 20 August, 1964, when the distribution of certificates took place; work at the Centre and preparation by students for their departure continued until the closing date of the course, 27 August...

Daily hours of work at the Centre were 8.15 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Students studied at night also.”

The first training programme begins

The Centre was officially opened by the Director of Education in Fiji, Mr J.G. Rodger, on 20 September 1963. About 100 local dignitaries attended the opening, and three days later, on 23 September, the first course began.

The Centre was housed in two wooden army huts at Nabua, three miles from the centre of Suva. Today the site houses SPC’s main Fiji offices, but in 1963 it was “an open windswept green expanse with far reaching views”. For their new incarnation, the huts were converted into offices, classrooms, and a lean-to kitchen (two further huts were added in 1965). Accommodation for the women was provided in Nawela Hostel in central Suva, and every weekday they were taken by bus to the Centre for their classes.

The purpose of the course was twofold – to teach better ways to manage the home and family; and to train, motivate and empower the women to take on new roles on their return home, and pass on these newly learned skills and approaches. Home economics dominated the first curriculum, with subjects including food production, nutrition, home management, clothing (‘selection, construction and care’), family living and family health. Students also learned the principles and practice of community education, English and public speaking, and club organisation. Once they had learned the basics, they gained experience and confidence by going out into Fijian communities and teaching short courses to women’s groups – an activity that continued in a similar form throughout the 50 years (later as the Community Outreach Programme).

A great deal of work went into setting up the Centre and developing the first course, with the hope that the Centre would become a long-term institution. According to Mr Rodgers in his address at the opening ceremony, “Whether this Centre will in fact develop into a full-blown Community Education Centre will depend not only on the financial resources of the South Pacific Commission but, more important, on the success of this first course.” Responsibility rested largely with the students: “If, when you go home, you show by your work that this course really has been worthwhile, then you will do more than anybody else can to persuade the South Pacific Commission and the various territorial Governments that this Centre should be expanded into a full Community Education Training Centre.”
The early years

The first year was indeed a success. A graduation ceremony was held on 24 August 1964, with the Governor of Fiji Sir Derek Jakeway presenting certificates, and students demonstrating their work: “Visitors were conducted round the display of work by the students who described how they had made the furniture for the improvised living room, office and kitchen out of crates, boxes and paint. The exhibit of graded schemes of work as well as the excellent variety of hand-made articles and cooked foods caused most appreciative comment. The smokeless stove was in use; tea and homemade scones and cakes were served by the students.”
For the second course, the start date was moved to the beginning of 1965, and for the next few years the course ran for 11 months from January to December. Marjorie Stewart left after three years, and Mrs Elizabeth Eden became Centre Director in 1968 until the beginning of 1970. By the close of her tenure, “106 young women from 17 countries have been equipped to make a contribution to community welfare amongst their own people.”

The residential course was not the only activity of the Community Education Training Centre. The Centre gave equal weight to follow-up visits to returned students in their countries, to assist them in their new roles, help them with any problems they might be facing, and at the same time to gauge the usefulness of the course and gather opinions and suggestions on how it might be modified and improved. A third activity was the awarding of fellowships to enable the most promising students to study overseas, with a view to them taking over from the expatriate staff at the Centre when trained.

The Centre also began to develop other courses in response to demand. According to SPC’s annual report for 1968–69, “An aspect of the Centre which has not received much publicity, but one which has been increasingly significant, has been the provision of specialised training of short duration to a variety of organisations and groups in Fiji. Nurses from the Central School of Nursing have been given special training in the preparation of visual aids, and medical officers from the School of Medicine have participated in nutrition lectures. Women students of the Fiji School of Agriculture who are in their final year of diploma work have been given training in aspects of home economics for field extension work. ... The Centre has also been host to local groups and offers its facilities to enable local organisations to carry out specialised training.” The Centre was already showing the flexibility and response to demand that characterised its entire fifty years, and beginning to build enduring partnerships.

On her departure Elizabeth Eden summarised the Centre’s achievements, and her hopes for its future: “It can be seen that the SPC Training Centre, whilst offering a series of home economics courses as a continuing service, has pioneered a number of other activities in the general field of community education. It is therefore to be hoped that its staff and facilities will be increasingly used to meet the wishes and needs of the island territories for further training in community education and other forms of social development.”
Pacific Islanders take the lead

After Elizabeth Eden’s departure, Miss Caroline Fredrickson directed the Centre for the next two years, until the appointment in January 1972 of the Centre’s first local Principal, Miss Mee Kwain Sue from Fiji (later Mrs Mee Kwain Mar). Mee Kwain Sue was one of the first recipients of a fellowship from the Centre and had recently returned from Australia where she had completed a Diploma in Home Economics and Basic Science. She was to become the Centre’s longest serving Principal, remaining in the position until 1985.

During her years of leadership, the Centre consolidated its role as a regional training centre for women, while at the same time adapting and developing the programme to keep up with regional and global changes. Women in the Pacific were finding their voice, and building expectations that extended beyond their role in the home. Acknowledging this, the training programme began a shift in focus from family to community. There was also a call for economic empowerment, and courses were developed to equip women with skills that could help them to earn money and develop small businesses.

The Centre continued to build on the partnerships developed in the early years, and healthy funding allowed the annual intake of students to double in the early 1970s, to around 40 women. The Centre and its activities became increasingly well known in Fiji and the Centre’s open days, which were held towards the end of the course, were very popular. People hired buses and travelled from the other side of Viti Levu to see the new technologies that they had heard about. In 1978, for example, according to the Centre’s annual report “The Centre was open to all between 29 October and 2 November, and it seemed that all came, even busloads from Lautoka. On the Thursday alone, it was estimated that well over a thousand visitors came to learn about our work. The theme of the Open Days was self-reliance, which the students symbolised by a coconut tree whose trunk was the Centre, the leaves all participants at whatever level and capacity, and the fruit the knowledge that they intended to share with their own communities.”

Other changes in the 1970s included the increasing use of communication technologies and media, and training in broadcasting and especially radio skills began in a new recording studio in 1972.

Training outside Fiji also continued, and in 1978 a mobile unit was established that allowed the
1.10 Making tapa
staff to take their training courses into the field much more easily: “This team is based at Suva at the Community Education Training Centre, and travels to other countries within the region to conduct training courses for former Community Education Training Centre graduates and similar community workers... Priority also is given to meeting the needs of others who have not had the opportunity of attending CETC because of language difficulties or lack of formal education.”

A call for change

By 1981, the Centre had produced more than five hundred graduates, with very positive feedback from SPC member countries and territories at the annual meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations. However, there was also a feeling that the Centre was not achieving its full potential. In July 1981, the Seminar on South Pacific Women put it bluntly: “The Seminar believes that the Community Education Training Centre does not meet the current needs of Pacific Island women in their development role, nor is it operating at the optimal level. It is constrained by staffing limitations, financial limitations, and complete inadequacy of buildings and land available.” To address these issues, recommendations included “A thorough evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of CETC” and “To relocate CETC in a more suitable environment outside the urban setting where both training facilities and accommodation may be located together.”

The first of these recommendations was implemented just a year later in 1982, when the first external review of the Centre was undertaken. Claire Slatter from the University of the South Pacific examined the objectives and activities of the Centre against the changing socio-economic realities of the region, and the wider role now expected of women in development. Her recommendations included a reorientation of the curriculum away from training in ‘domestic’ skills towards an increased focus on development studies.

Slatter’s review led to a major revision of the curriculum, with the new curriculum launched in 1984. A core course in Community Development was developed and comprised about 60% of the curriculum, with the remaining 40% dedicated to nutrition and health, home economics, and agriculture. With minor revisions through the years, this structure remained in place for the next 20 years.
A new home for the Centre

In 1986 the Centre relocated to a purpose-built campus at Narere, eight miles from Suva. The new campus was fully self-contained, with living quarters for the students as well as training facilities, including lecture rooms, a small library, sewing room, an ‘island kitchen’, and staff offices. The Narere campus became the Centre’s home for the remaining 27 years of operation, with many additions and renovations over the years. In the late 1990s, for example, a large two-storey building was added providing extra classroom space that could be converted into a large hall for events such as graduation ceremonies. A new radio studio was also added in the late 1990s. In the early 2000s, major renovation works were carried out on the original buildings, a new accommodation block was added, and the Centre was made more accessible for people with disabilities.

A student’s view of the new campus at Narere

“The campus is situated between the City of Suva and Nausori Airport. It is a new campus and it is just one year old. We are the second group to use it. This centre is well equipped with modern teaching aids. The accommodation where the students live is divided into four flats. Each flat takes 6 students, and every week the girls from each flat take turns in cooking the family meal. It was indeed a good learning exercise to live together with people from different ways of life.”

Ms Shako Lomae from Maloelap (Marshall Islands), 1987
Women as development agents

Keeping up with a constantly changing world, and ensuring that the Centre met the correspondingly changing needs of women, was an ongoing challenge through the decades. By 1993, according to the second external review, “[The Centre’s] potential to meet changing women’s roles in the context of increased urbanisation, global transportation and communication networks, technological interventions, booming rural growth centres and environmentally sensitive programmes means that the current emphasis in the training requires further modification and support.”

The reviewer, Eci Kikau, continued: “The image of the barefoot community worker has to be changed to one that depicts a professional facilitator equipped with the relevant skills aimed at promoting sustainable community development within fragile island ecosystems currently faced with real economic and resource constraints.”

Thus the course continued to strengthen its focus on community development, keeping abreast of the latest developments in the field. The women learned participatory methods to enhance their role as community facilitators. At the same time, there was a rising demand for income-generating activities and business skills, and the Centre responded by broadening its choice of skills training. New courses included fisheries, environment, computer skills and multimedia.

The 1990s saw global economic recession and a fall in development funding, and the Centre did not escape. Funding cuts led to reduced staffing for a period, but the Centre rose to the challenge with the use of volunteer staff and more external instructors. Student funding was mostly maintained, however, and numbers remained in the upper thirties through most years.
Into the 21st century

The 2002 review also pointed out that “The educational context of the programme is ... markedly different from the context in which it began.” More training courses were now available in the region, and the Centre was called on to redefine its niche and its comparative advantage.

The Centre responded by reorienting the basic training course in community development to an advanced level programme, with higher level entry requirements and a focus on strengthening leadership, management, and entrepreneurial skills. It also developed a self-funded programme, the Business Development Advisory Programme, which comprised a training-of-trainers course, a regional micro, small and medium enterprises network, and a range of technical advisories offered both at the Centre and in countries. The course aimed to develop and enhance entrepreneurial and business development and management skills for both women and men. Specific courses on leadership and governance skills for women managers were also offered as short courses when funding was available.

Although a programme of SPC, the Centre had become somewhat isolated from the mainstream organisation. This changed in 2007 when the Centre was merged with the Gender, Culture and Youth Programme of the Social Resources Division to form the new Human Development Programme. Three years later, in 2011, SPC carried out a further restructure and the Centre again became a stand-alone programme under the newly formed Education, Training and Human Development Division, alongside the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA).

In 2010, the Centre described its role as “the only residential regional training facility that prioritises Pacific Island women participants in targeted programmes such as community development and management, leadership and governance, entrepreneurship and gender equality. The aim of CETC is to provide regional focused adult training to assist Pacific Island countries in their delivery of social policy services and programmes.”
The end of an era

Redefined as a ‘Centre of Excellence’, and with two advanced courses targeting key participant groups, the Centre nonetheless struggled to justify its programme in the context of SPC’s more technical portfolio in the 2000s. An SPC external review of 2012 sealed the fate of the Centre, and it was announced in late 2012 that the main community development course, in its new modular form and with newly awarded accreditation, was to move to the University of the South Pacific. The Business Development Advisory Programme would be placed under another SPC programme, and the Centre itself would close in 2013 after the final seven-month course was completed.

--- It was the end of an era ---

In 1988, during the Centre’s 25th anniversary celebrations, Fiji’s Minister for Women and Social Welfare Adi Finau Tabakaucoro addressed the graduates with the following words, which are equally apt for the closure of the Centre:

“Do not worry about leaving the Institution behind, it is difficult to carry it anyway and harder still to share. It will grow old and vulnerable to mold and rust. In your heads and hearts, you carry something that is limitless and priceless. When it comes to sharing, you will never run out of it. It will not rust provided you keep in touch, comparing, contrasting and modifying what you have learned here.”

Men at the Centre

Through the first decades of the residential course it was accepted that a focus on women only was appropriate, but with the rise of gender awareness this approach began to be questioned. The women themselves almost unanimously preferred that the course remain for women only. “Men will spoil the soup” said one graduate in 2008. From a practical point of view, especially after the move to the Narere campus, it was agreed that having men on the residential course would be problematic. In the 2002 external review, “Most informants suggested that the main seven-month programme should continue to be offered to women only. The main reasons they opposed the inclusion of men were the crowded hostel facilities, prevailing cultural attitudes of husbands and parents, increased leadership roles given to women, the urgent training needs of women and the potential impact of such training on communities and families.” By 2008, however, there were stronger feelings from the countries and from within SPC that the course should move towards being co-educational, as soon as the practical issues could be resolved. The decision was pre-empted by the closing of the residential course and the move of the training programme to the University of the South Pacific, where it will be fully available to men as well as women.

The second major training programme run from the Centre, the Business Development Advisory Programme which began in 2004, was open to both men and women, and through the years more than 200 men completed this course. Many others were trained through short courses and in-country training.
Staying in touch
The Community Education Training Centre ‘family’ is spread over a vast area of ocean, but the members have worked hard to stay in touch. From the very beginning a newsletter was regularly sent out to returned students. It was an annual production in the early days, increasing in frequency to up to four issues a year as the practicalities of communication became easier. “On receipt of the newsletter, many students write to the centre expressing their gratitude at being remembered and giving news of their own activities,” said Elizabeth Eden in 1969. The newsletter was called ‘CETC News’ from 1981, and ‘Community Training Update’ from 1999.

Staying in touch has become much easier in recent years, with the spread of the internet even to some of the very remote islands. Former students and staff can now link up, and share news, memories and photographs through a Facebook page. The Centre also stays in touch with its alumni via three e-mail-based networks.

At least six country alumni groups have also been set up, providing another forum for graduates to stay in touch, support each other, and share their memories of the Centre.

Awards for Business Excellence
In recognition of the efforts of the Centre staff in streamlining the training programme, increasing its flexibility and accessibility as a distance learning course, and moving it towards formal accreditation, the Centre received two Fiji Business Excellence awards in later years. In 2010 it won an award in the Committed to Business Excellence category, and in 2012 in the Achieved Business Excellence category. The national awards recognise Fiji-based organisations that are performing exceptionally well in areas such as leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, and business results.

“The key challenge for the Centre, in my view, was how to develop and sustain a niche programme to cater for varying, new and emerging demands from its member communities and at the same time, how to link these with SPC’s own evolving complex and highly technical portfolios within a context of increasing economic austerity. This key challenge triggered other programme and institutional challenges and drove some of the reforms made over the years, and the gradual shift in target participants, in recruitment processes and in the move from a non-formal programme to an accredited programme.” Dr Lia Maka, Head of the Community Training Centre
“I enjoy the students greatly, and am so content about this opportunity to train indigenous leaders; I fear we can't get far in a year, the girls are working very well, conscientious and eager, they are happy too; but it is one thing to whack away at classroom work, another to tackle their governments and their village leaders and to keep up heart... I am taking the classes on development in the community, methods of group work, programme planning and so on; as well as English. It is really superb to be teaching a group of those who are actually taking up this community work.”

From a personal letter written by Marjorie Stewart in November 1963
Chapter 2

The staff: A dedicated and committed team

Very many people – women and men, expatriates and Pacific Islanders – held staff positions or assisted with training at CETC through the years. From diverse backgrounds and disciplines, they shared a commitment to working with the women of the Pacific, to help them develop their skills and self-confidence, and their abilities to contribute to the development of their communities and their countries. In later years they also taught the Business Development Advisory Programme.

Expatriate beginnings

Three expatriate women comprised the professional staff at the launch of the Centre in 1963. Marjorie Stewart was the founding Director, Elizabeth Eden directed the main Home Economics programme, and Margaret Crowley, who was also a qualified home economist, assisted Mrs Eden. Fijian Losalini Gucake was also on the founding staff as a ‘counterpart’ seconded by the Fiji Government.

Marjorie Stewart, who was Irish, was an enthusiastic and inspirational leader with strong views on women’s roles and rights. Arriving in Fiji in the 1950s after several years working in East and West Africa, she joined a group of like-minded women who together pushed for Pacific women’s education and empowerment. She was almost single-handedly responsible for the setting up of CETC, both developing the idea and also practically, helping develop the premises, plan the curriculum, and select the students before the Centre opened. She directed the course through its first three years, before handing over to Mr Edward Clunies-Ross.

Elizabeth Eden and Margaret Crowley were both employed by FAO and seconded to the Centre. Elizabeth Eden was Scottish and had worked in Ghana prior to arriving in Fiji, while Margaret Crowley was Irish and had previously worked in Nigeria. In the early years the two home economists took it in turns with one directing the course at the Centre while the other travelled in the region, following up on returned students and getting feedback on the usefulness of the course.
Elizabeth Eden took over as Director of the Centre in 1967 until she left at the beginning of 1970. She returned 13 years later in 1983 for a social visit. She told CETC News that she was living in her native Scotland and still in touch with Marjorie Stewart in England. Seeing the Centre thriving was, she said, “absolutely marvellous”.

Staffing in the early years

The intention from the outset was for the Centre to be staffed and run by Pacific Island staff as soon as possible. Ideally the staff would be drawn from across the region, although in reality most of the professional staff through the years were Fijian.

In the 1960s, because of limited opportunities in the region, it was decided that overseas training was needed for the senior positions. A fellowship scheme was set up to fund promising students to undertake such training, with a commitment to take up staff positions on their return to the region. Other Fijian staff worked alongside the expatriate staff as ‘counterparts’, effectively learning ‘on the job’.

Losalini Gucake was the first of the Fijian ‘counterpart’ staff, working with the expat staff in the first year. She went on to study in the UK at Seaford Training College of Housecraft. Mee Kwain Sue, also Fijian, received a CETC fellowship in 1965 and spent four years studying for a Diploma in Home Economics and Basic Science at Larnook Teachers College in Victoria, Australia. She completed the course with distinction, and returned to the Centre in 1970 where she worked as an instructor under Caroline Fredrickson’s headship for two years. In 1972, still in her twenties, she took over from Miss Fredrickson as the first Pacific Island Head. She went on to be the longest serving Head, leaving in 1985.

Mee Kwain Sue had strong support during her time at the Centre from Mereseini Vulaca and Pulotu Cokanasiga. Mrs Vulaca attended the Seaford Training College of Housecraft in 1966–67, and then returned to Fiji and worked alongside Elizabeth Eden in the late 1960s, becoming the Instructor in Home Economics in 1972. She remained at the Centre through the 1970s and into the late 1980s, rising to the position of Assistant Principal. She left in 1987. Mrs Cokanasiga arrived at the Centre in 1978 after a year’s training at Larnook Teachers College and was the Home Economics Instructor for nine years, also departing in 1987. Another long-serving staff member, Food and Nutrition Instructor Mrs Adi Sai Tuivanuavou, began her tenure under Mee Kwain Sue’s headship and remained at the Centre until 1991.

“One thing that I admire most is the teaching staff that we have in this Centre. They are dedicated in their work and they do have a lot of patience in dealing with us... They have never failed us... In all honesty I really owe a lot to them. They have really nurtured us and prepared us to meet new demands.”

Siaunofo T. Logologo, Samoa, 1986
Staffing through the middle years

The Centre depended on a small professional staff specialised in the core subjects, and supplemented by expertise drawn from outside the Centre, either from other SPC programmes or from partner organisations mostly based in Suva. The Director (or Principal or Head, as the position was variously called) had a teaching role in addition to administrative duties, and the other staff – usually two people – provided a complement of skills in home economics (later separated into health, nutrition and agriculture), and later, community development.

At the end of 1985 Mee Kwain Sue handed over to another Fijian, Mrs Lili King, who remained in charge until 1995. The Centre had recently employed its first Instructor in Community Development, Mr Taniela Colamoto. Also reflecting changes in the curriculum, this period saw the first instructor devoted to agriculture, Mr Franco Mateariki, who was with the Centre from 1985 to 1993. Mr Mateariki was a Cook Islander and a natural teacher who loved to share his passion for farming. According to Acting Principal Mereseini Vulaca in 1986, “His unstructured field activities always create laughter and cheer among students.”
Mr Keresoni Baledrokadroka was Principal for just one year in 1996, and then Samoan Ms Nu’ufou Petaia was appointed and held the position for seven years, until 2004. She was ably assisted by Mrs Sereima Lutubula who was Instructor in Food and Nutrition and Home Economics from 1998 until 2006. A succession of instructors in Community Development and Agriculture completed the team during this period.

“CETC instructors are caring, patient, dedicated and well respected by trainees. Their commitment should be acclaimed more widely within SPC. Almost all (22) of the current students reported that subjects were taught in a way that made them want to learn (while six indicated some courses were a bit boring).”

From the 2002 external review

The final team

Dr Lia Maka, a Tongan, arrived at the Centre in November 2004 and took over from Ms Petaia. Dr Maka took the Centre through some of its most sweeping changes as the training programme responded to the high demands of the 21st century. Her key team for almost the entire period up to the Centre’s closure in 2013 comprised Mr Aminiasi Driu, who was Instructor in Community Development and Management/Integrated Agriculture, and Mrs Atelini Koroiwaca, Instructor in Women, Health and Nutrition/Households and Livelihoods. Together this team managed the transition of the community development programme to a competency-based modular course that would eventually move to the University of the South Pacific. They also developed the new Business Development Advisory Programme.

“I think all staff who worked at the Centre would agree that one of the main challenges was training such a diverse group of students. They came from different backgrounds, had different experiences, and different levels of formal education. That was a challenge for all of us. But it also created a rich learning community. I used to draw on the more experienced women to share their knowledge with the group. That way we managed to turn the diversity to an advantage, and in fact, I learned a lot from the students.”

External instructors

The Centre’s professional staff taught the core subjects of community development and home economics, but a significant amount of teaching at the Centre was done by external experts who came in to deliver specialised training, usually as short courses and electives. Over the years, roughly 50% of the teaching was done by external instructors. Some returned year after year and built a special relationship with the Centre.

One early visiting lecturer who returned many times was Mrs Susan Parkinson. A pioneer of healthy eating in the Pacific and a dedicated supporter of women’s education, she followed the work of the Centre with great interest into her old age.

Another external instructor who contributed to the Centre over many years was Mr Richard Herman of the St John Ambulance Brigade. From the first course in 1963/64 through to the late 1980s, Mr Herman taught first aid at the Centre. Even after he had risen to Director and Commander of the Brigade in Fiji, he continued to visit the Centre, regularly presenting First Aid Certificates at the graduation ceremony. By 1987, it was estimated that he had trained more than 650 women at the Centre.
In the 2000s, veteran Fiji radio personality Yaminiasi Gaunavou taught the radio courses for several years, as well as contributing to SPC more widely, for example, hosting the Pacific Way series.

For more than a decade, husband and wife team Wati and Onisimo Tabuyaqona taught hospitality-related courses that focused on informal economic opportunities. Jenny Corrie Terawea was another much-respected instructor, teaching business short courses.

These are just some of the many dedicated people who contributed their knowledge, skills and time to the Centre through the years, and to whom the graduates and the Centre’s professional staff owe a debt of gratitude.

### Directors and key professional staff at the Community Education Training Centre, 1963–2013*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Duty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miss Marjorie Stewart</td>
<td>Director 1963–1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Elizabeth Eden</td>
<td>Director of Home Economics Programme 1964–1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Margaret Crowley</td>
<td>Instructor in Home Economics 1963–1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Losalini Gucake</td>
<td>Home Economics Assistant Instructor 1963–1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Selai Tuivanuavou</td>
<td>Home Economics Assistant Instructor 1964–1966, 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Edward Clunies-Ross</td>
<td>Director 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Eva Aspegren</td>
<td>Instructor in Home Economics 1967–1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Mereseini Vulaca</td>
<td>Home Economics Assistant Instructor 1967–1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructor in Home Economics 1972–1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Principal 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Elizabeth Eden</td>
<td>Director 1968–1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Caroline M. Fredrickson</td>
<td>Director 1970–1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Uta Dierking</td>
<td>FAO Associate Expert and Home Economist/Nutritionist 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Josephine J.J. Wittenberg</td>
<td>FAO Associate Expert in Home Economics, with special responsibility for work with the French-speaking Territories 1970 – 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Mee Kwain Sue</td>
<td>Instructor in Home Economics for Community Workers 1970–1971, Director 1972–1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Pulotu Cokanasiga</td>
<td>Instructor in Home Economics 1978–1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Adi Sai Tuivanuavou</td>
<td>Instructor in Food and Nutrition 1980–1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Taniela Colamoto</td>
<td>Instructor in Community Development 1984–1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Lili King</td>
<td>Principal 1986–1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Franco Mateariki</td>
<td>Instructor in Agriculture 1985–1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Akerei Salesa</td>
<td>Instructor in Agriculture 1993–1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Vani Samuwai</td>
<td>Instructor in Home Economics/Food and Nutrition 1992–1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Keresoni Baledrokadroka</td>
<td>Principal 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Nu’ufou Pataia</td>
<td>Principal 1997–2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Sereima Lutubula</td>
<td>Instructor in Food and Nutrition/Home Economics 1998–2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Stephen Hazelman</td>
<td>Instructor in Agriculture/Community Development 1999–2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Maikeli Savena</td>
<td>Instructor in Agriculture/Community Development 2002–2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Tomasi Buwawa</td>
<td>Instructor in Community Development and Agriculture 2004–2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Lia Maka</td>
<td>Head 2005–2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Aminiasi Driu</td>
<td>Instructor in Community Development and Management/Integrated Agriculture 2006–2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Atelini Seeto Koroiwaca</td>
<td>Instructor in Women, Health and Nutrition/Households and Livelihoods 2008–2013</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Information in this table is derived from various sources, and there may be omissions or errors, for which we apologise.*
2.18 Class in the 1980s
2.19 Students Letisia Hoveureux and Rosalyne Daly of New Caledonia, 2013
2.20 Dr Lia Maka
2.21 Stairs to the computer lab
3.1 Elizabeth Eden and the pioneer students after the opening of CETC in 1963
Chapter 3

The students, and the student experience

The more than 1700 students who over the years attended the residential course at the Community Education Training Centre were mostly adult women from the Pacific Islands – but these were probably the only characteristics they all shared. From different countries and cultures, with different life experiences and educational backgrounds, from recent school-leavers to mature women, married with children or single, each cohort was itself a lesson in diversity. This may have posed a challenge to the course designers, but for the women it presented an enriching environment and a unique learning opportunity.

“We came from thirteen countries of the region with different backgrounds and attitudes, but we learned to accept each other’s cultures, customs and traditional beliefs.”
Ms Shako Lomae from Maloelap, Marshall Islands, in 1987.

“On arriving at CETC, I did not know what to expect. Everyone was older than me; I thought I wouldn’t fit in. I was away from my comfort zone and I missed my friends. Slowly, I made friends with everyone and became inseparable from some.”
Mei Tiko, Fiji, 2009 graduate, writing in 2010.

“On arriving at CETC, I did not know what to expect. Everyone was older than me; I thought I wouldn’t fit in. I was away from my comfort zone and I missed my friends. Slowly, I made friends with everyone and became inseparable from some.”
Mei Tiko, Fiji, 2009 graduate, writing in 2010.
3.2 Students relaxing outside class
3.3 Students in the hostel, 1965
3.4 Students in the canteen, 1966
3.5 Students in their accommodation, 2002
Students’ reasons for applying to attend CETC (reasons were prioritised as first and second).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>First Number</th>
<th>First %</th>
<th>Second Number</th>
<th>Second %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To learn community leadership skills</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn about communities</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn practical skills</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn from other Pacific women</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn or improve English language skills</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To increase my chances of paid employment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To further my education</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To live away from home/travel to another country</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn how to conduct training</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* From the 2004 tracer study. Data relate to 170 CETC graduates from 1992 to 2002.

Student selection

The requirements for applicants to the community development course were deliberately broad, so that different country or individual situations should not preclude the most appropriate candidates from being put forward. The ‘ideal’ student was a woman who was already working in some area of community development and would continue in this role on her return, equipped with deeper knowledge and new tools.

Calls for applicants were sent to relevant government agencies, and circulated to relevant non-government organisations in the countries including church and women’s groups. The Centre inevitably developed strong links with Women’s Interests Offices where these existed, and many sent their staff for the training course. Teachers were also a target group, especially of home economics in the early years. The suggested age range was between about 20 and 40 years, but this was flexible. Women could be single or married, but pregnant women were not accepted.

The students themselves also had a choice to make in deciding to apply for the course. The fact that the course required women to leave their homes and families for many months (from 11 months in the early years, to 7 months in later years) deterred many potential candidates, particularly women with young families or more mature women who were already working within the community and felt they could not abandon their commitments. This was an unfortunate trade-off of having a residential course, and the main reason the course length was reduced over the years.

In 2004, as part of a tracer study, 170 women who had graduated from the Centre between 1992 and 2002 were asked why they had originally applied for the course. Their answers are shown in the accompanying table. The majority were motivated by the opportunity to gain leadership skills and to learn new practical skills.
The student experience

For the students the CETC experience was intense, both inside the classroom and out. Over the years the course length varied, but whatever the length it was never enough to fit everything in. The 2002 external review noted “Two-thirds of the current students said the programme was too short...Most, however, did not want a longer programme because of family ties and responsibilities”.

A typical daily schedule, from the Student Handbook 2010:

```
6.00 – 6.45 am   – Morning duties
6.45 – 7.45 am   – Breakfast
8.30 am          – Classes begin
10.30 – 11.00 am – Morning break
1.00 – 2.00 pm   – Lunch
2.00 pm          – Afternoon classes begin
4.00 pm          – End of classes
4.30 – 6.30 pm   – Extra classes
6.30 – 7.30 pm   – Dinner
8.00 – 10.30 pm  – Study
11.00 pm         – Lights off
```

From the daily schedule, there seems little social time available for the students. The reality, however, is that social life was integral to the course – most activities were informal and social.

During a typical working day, students might be in the classroom, the sewing room, the kitchen, or the garden. Lessons on, for example, the theory of nutrition and health might be followed by a cookery demonstration or a carpentry project. There were many educational visits around Suva and further afield in Viti Levu. Throughout the years, the weeks of practical community work were always a highlight of the course.

“Forty students from the Pacific region arrived anxious, shy, and eager to begin a new adventure. Accommodated in two ‘new’ houses in Namadi Heights as well as in the two Raiwai Housing Authority flats, the participants shared 10 months of hard work, cultural exchange, and the ups and downs of being far from home in a new environment.”

From the 1981 annual report
The students were encouraged to get to know their host country, and to participate in activities outside the Centre. They often fielded sports teams in local competitions and took part in many charitable events. Suva’s annual Hibiscus Festival was another highlight, with the students often joining in the fun. In 1981, “CETC students won second place in the 25th Anniversary Hibiscus Festival Float Parade... A student representative of each country at the Centre this year rode on the float. Each one wore her native costume and carried handicrafts from her country. There was a large map showing the countries of the students. The float was decorated to look like an island.”

In the evenings the students returned to their residences. Before the opening of the residential campus at Narere in 1986, the students were accommodated at various hostels in Suva city. The Centre also acquired some flats in the late 1960s, and the students spent several weeks living a more ‘independent’ life, shopping and cooking for each other and keeping the flats tidy and clean. “During the two periods, each of 4 weeks, residence in the flat, students are given the equivalent of their hostel food allowance and are responsible for meal planning, marketing [shopping] and cooking their own meals. These periods of living in a small ‘family’ group are much enjoyed and it has provided an opportunity to put into practice what is learned about budgeting, consumer education and all other aspects of home economics” (from Mrs Eden’s 1963–69 report).

This ‘educational experience’ was continued after relocation to Narere. Lunches and dinners were cooked for the students during the week, but “Students cook their own meals in groups of 6 (a flat) for all breakfasts and for weekends and are expected to do all the market shopping for the weekend. Students on cooking roster are given cash for shopping for the week and need to budget and keep a record of purchases for checking at the end of each week” (in 1988).

A testing time

While the residential course was a rewarding experience for most of the students, there were also many challenges. The Centre staff worked hard to make the women feel at home, and to provide as much support as they could to help them to settle in, but all must have had some feelings of homesickness, away from their families and friends. Many were leaving their communities for the first time in their lives, and all must have felt a degree of ‘culture shock’ on arriving in the Pacific’s largest city. One student wrote candidly about her feelings during the first few weeks in 1989: “The first few weeks of the course I found very difficult. I was really lost and all I wanted to do was to go back home. I spent more time crying than to concentrate on my work and I was not gaining anything.” She recovered and went on to graduate successfully.
Language also caused difficulties. Few shared a first language, and the course was taught in English which caused problems for some, especially the women from the French-speaking countries. One student was diagnosed with depression attributed to her difficulty understanding English and her worry about following and completing the course. With different levels of education, some also struggled with the complexity of certain elements of the course.

For a small number of students, the difficulties proved too much and they returned home before the end of the course. Others were given extra support to help them through the difficult times.

For most students however, the overall experience was a positive one that they would remember for the rest of their lives. “Living together as a family, I had ... some problems around. We had mixed feelings of one another, but have managed to solve them between ourselves. The laughter, joy, sorrow and all the fun I had in this place I will never forget” said American Samoan Siaunofo Logologo in 1985.

Graduation

Despite the many challenges the women faced, most completed the course and graduation day was a joyful celebration ahead of returning home to be reunited with families and friends.
Returning home

Expectations were high on the women’s return home. According to Mr J.G. Rodger at the opening of the first course, “Your territories are expecting big things of you when you return home in a year’s time; and so is the South Pacific Commission.”

However, no one expected it to be plain sailing. The returning women were going against cultural trends in the 1960s: “The education of women is a new concept in most territories,” observed Mrs Eden. Also, she explained in an interview for the Ottawa Citizen newspaper in August 1968, “There is tremendous veneration for the old, so that most of the students are nervous about going home to teach their ‘aunties’.” However, things often turned out better than expected: “These same ‘aunties’ they have been dreading have a great, new respect for them – for haven’t they made the long journey to the great metropolis of Suva with its 60,000 inhabitants?”

There were other challenges for the returned students. To make the most of their training, their governments often placed them in positions remote from their own communities, again taking them away from their families to places where communications were often difficult and transport expensive.

By the early 2000s, new challenges were evident, such as the temptation to relocate from rural communities to the towns. “[The women graduates] face the demands of the cash economy and the appeal of urban life. It seems that young single graduates who are not tied to their rural communities are migrating increasingly to urban areas”, said the 2002 external review. By this time also, “CETC graduates have far fewer job opportunities compared with those in earlier decades. Governments are reducing staff positions, particularly in extension services.”

Mrs Eden took a pragmatic view in 1970. “One could say that many students are not working to full capacity or not utilized to the full extent, but in view of all the difficulties they encounter in their work, they are using their training well. Very few can be considered as failures in view of the aims and goals of the Centre.”

Judging by the many letters written by graduates to the staff through the years, the majority of graduates took away very happy memories of their time at the Centre, and most put their new skills to good use.

Happy memories

“Dear Mee Kwain Sue, Ni sa bula vinaka to you again and how is life treating you after we left? ... on my way home I really want to come back to Suva again because I was thinking of the course and the staff and not only that but I missed the girls with the fun and jokes that we usually have at the centre but especially at our own residences...”
Personal letter from 1976 Tongan graduate Fatafehi

“Dear Miss Whitmore, ... Now I am in my new school which is in the eastern outer part of the Solomons. ... These are the times I really miss the centre, her good staff and the many good friends. I’m wishing each time if I could be at the centre again doing some new things. The centre has been such a good place with just the right kind of people which I was very proud of.”
Personal letter from Solomon Islander Edrie Tahioa in 1981

“CETC is more than a training centre that has taught me a lot of skills to help my community; coming back here I feel as if I am coming home.”
Juliet Hmentori, from Papua New Guinea, 2000 graduate on returning in 2010 for a refresher course.
3.12 Adi Lady Lala Mara awarding graduation certificates in 1969. Elizabeth Eden is on the left
3.13 Returning home in the 1960s
3.14 Proud graduates in 2012
3.15 Students on the Business Advisory Training Programme
3.16 The class of 1987
3.17 The class of 2013
3.18 Student from New Caledonia in the computer lab, 2013
3.19 CETC classrooms, 2013
3.20 Drum (lali) at CETC, 2013
3.21 Drying taro in the solar dryer, 2013
The Business Development Advisory Programme

The profile of students attending the Business Development Advisory Programme between 2008 and 2013 was different. This course responded to the needs of the growing private sector and targeted entrepreneurs and business support service providers. More than 700 men and women were trained by the programme at the Centre and at in-country courses. There was also some overlap – some of the business programme students had previously graduated from the Centre’s community development programme and then moved into the private sector.

A student’s view, by Mrs Rosita Villar, Northern Mariana, 1987

“When we first arrived at this Centre, some of us were given very little information about the course and we were anxious to know more about it. I could still recall the expressions that were seen on our faces, they showed uncertainty and confusion and we were wondering whether we would achieve the same as former graduates. Now by looking at my fellow colleagues I could see that that look has been replaced with a new look of courage and determination.

The 1987 course has been a great challenge and to all of us, it has been a turning point of our life. We all came with different expectations but through sharing, learning and working together we were able to achieve the many things that have made us what we are today. We have changed our attitudes towards life and above all we are better equipped to meet the challenges of life. We are proud of what we have achieved and accomplished during the nine months of training.

We have now joined over 600 other women graduates in the Pacific Region who have gone before us over the past 24 years. As we all know that graduation does not only recognise past accomplishments but also requires future beginnings and actions. Our newly acquired knowledge of ourselves, our communities, our countries, and the Pacific Region, now lift us up to a new level of understanding and present a challenge to us; that challenge is to be of service to ourselves, to our communities, our countries and the Pacific Region. We know we can meet that challenge because of what we have learned at CETC.

To complete this course we have left our families and friends behind and readjusted to new persons, new concepts and even our renewed self! A friend once told me that you only know that a fish is wet when it comes out of the water. So we have now come to fully understand ourselves only after leaving our countries and families behind and being part of CETC for 9 months. We have really changed and the changes are to our advantage and to those whom we go forth to serve. We have changed and we will never be the same again.”
Chapter 4

The curricula

The designers of the community development course curriculum had an extremely difficult task. Addressing the many and diverse needs of the trainees within the constantly changing development context of their different countries and territories was far from simple. Undaunted, the staff strove to make the course useful to the students and relevant to their development needs. There was an ongoing commitment to gather regular feedback from different perspectives and use this to continually adapt and improve the course.

The course content changed gradually through the years as a result of this continual evaluation and feedback process. More significant revisions were also undertaken, usually following external reviews of the Centre which sought to align the course with broader changes happening in the region and beyond. The greatest changes to the curriculum took place in 1984 following review recommendations published in 1983; and in the 2000s when the course was adapted to a modular format and later to a competency-based learning and assessment framework.

The core subjects

Home economics dominated the first curriculum, with a strong focus on the home and family, reflecting women’s roles and expectations at that time. The main subject areas were food and nutrition (theory and practice, including food preservation), home management (from financial planning to making furniture), clothing (again with a family focus), ‘family living’ which covered family relationships and sex education, and family health.

The purpose of the course was twofold – to increase the skillset of the women in these important areas, and to build the students’ own training skills and confidence, so that they could effectively pass on their new knowledge. The women’s club was an important teaching vehicle in the 1960s, and club organisation and planning, along with community education methods and public speaking, comprised the ‘training-of-trainers’ element in 1963. All of the curriculum was compulsory in 1963/64, with no electives.

“Training at CETC is based on the assumption that people learn by doing and that effective training integrates theory and practice, and the training of community workers must be interdisciplinary and put as much value on personal development as on learning of skills.”

(Curriculum guidelines, 1983)
Over the following years the emphasis gradually moved away from the family and the community became the focus. The course content changed relatively little, however, through the 1970s.

By the early 1980s a significant update was needed, as Claire Slatter identified in her 1982 review: “... the course should incorporate, as a principal component, the various skills of community development and leadership training in order to prepare graduates for working effectively in the field. Training for instance in carrying out needs assessment, motivating communities, developing projects (both village improvement and income-generating projects) and lobbying for support from the government systems [is needed].”

The new curriculum was introduced in 1984, and represented a major shift from a home economics focus to building skills and knowledge in community and women’s development. This core element occupied 60% of the curriculum, and represented a shift from the idea of graduates as teachers to graduates as leaders and facilitators of participatory action within communities.

Through the years, the definition of ‘home economics’ itself changed, narrowing to specific home management activities while subjects such as food and nutrition and agriculture became separate subjects. The remaining 40% of the 1984 curriculum was under the headings ‘agriculture and related fields’, ‘health, food and nutrition’ and ‘home economics’. This was the first time agriculture had been elevated to a core subject; at the same time a specialist instructor in agriculture was hired and a very practical course was developed with a focus on appropriate and sustainable methods.

These elements – community development, food, health, nutrition, agriculture and home economics – remained the basis of the core curriculum through the 1980s and 1990s, and into the 2000s. Indeed, in 2013 these subjects still comprised the majority of the compulsory course.

“The Community Development course aims to provide the trainees with the basic principles and skills of community development to assist them in identifying, planning, seeking funds, implementing and evaluating appropriate community development programmes. An important addition for 2001 is the implementation of a participatory rural appraisal exercise at a Fijian village. Findings of the exercise will be used in planning and proposal writing sessions for the participants.”

(from the newsletter, 2001)
Supplementary subjects

In the early years there was no clear division into core and supplementary subjects and all elements of the curriculum were compulsory. Over time there was a gradual separation into core and supplementary, and into compulsory and elective courses.

Women as entrepreneurs and businesswomen was a growing concept from the 1970s, and an emphasis on income generation was readily introduced into the curriculum during the 1980s. Many of the subjects previously under the home economics umbrella, such as tailoring, were reoriented to a more commercial focus, and developed as supplementary courses. The potential of the rising tourism trade was recognised, and courses in catering and hospitality became very popular, as well as courses such as floral arts and fabric arts which targeted the tourist market. Educational visits were made to local enterprises, especially those set up and run by women. In 2001, for example, “the study tour will bring a change of scene for the trainees and the opportunity for exposure to real project situations in Fiji Islands. There will be an insight into a range of village-based small businesses run by women, larger entrepreneurship ventures and even corporate enterprises, which have come a long way from modest beginnings by diligent and industrious individuals.”

Business skills were also in high demand, and courses in subjects such as basic accounting and small business development became permanent fixtures.

Gender issues were introduced as an important concept and included as a supplementary course from the 1980s. After the 2002 review, gender was mainstreamed into the overall curriculum, and the separate course was no longer needed.

“Women’s roles are changing and they are becoming more involved in the cash economy. There is a need for women to be multi-skilled and to make a diverse contribution to their families and their community’s economy”

(Community Training Update newsletter, July–Sept 2002)
4.6 Learning to sew in the early years
4.7 First aid in the 1970s
4.8 A food processing class in 2009
4.9 Floral arts, a very popular class, in early 2000s
4.10 A visit to a garment factory, 2008
4.11 Making visual aids in 1964
4.12 Health check by students
4.13 CETC radio training
Audio-visual skills

Right from the beginning, methods of communicating were prioritised on the curriculum, as described in SPC’s annual report of 1968/69: “An important aspect of the Community Education Training Centre’s activities has been the provision of training courses on the preparation and use of audio-visual aids...” The techniques changed through the years – flannelgraphs and stencil duplicating techniques gave way to training in computer-based graphic design, for example – but the high priority remained.

Broadcasting entered the curriculum in the early 1970s, and a simple recording studio was set up in 1972 where students could learn the potential of radio as an educational tool. A new studio was built at the Narere campus in the late 1990s, and the Centre set up its own radio station.

The Community Outreach Programme

One key element that featured throughout the course was the practical fieldwork, later called the Community Outreach Programme. Although the methods changed, the principles remained the same – the women spent time within a community, putting into practice some of the skills they had learned, and learning for themselves the realities of community development. For most of the students through the years this was the highlight of the course.

For the very first community field work exercise in 1964, Marjorie Stewart worked hard to set up the programme (see letter to Mrs Hatherley). The students, in groups of five, taught week-long courses in subjects such as ‘You and your home’ or ‘The better kitchen’. There were two separate field expeditions, the second building on knowledge gained during the first. According to Elizabeth Eden in 1969, “After the first period of fieldwork the students gained confidence in themselves as leaders and started to realise the need for thorough planning and preparation for their work. The second period reinforced the above points. The students also started to realise that their work with people is a two-way communication – that they learn from the group at the same time as they teach. They were amazed and highly stimulated by the ready and eager participation of both women and men in the many discussions held on family relationships.”

The field work was very useful and highly appreciated by the students, but was also valued by the communities. From the beginning, it was seen not only as practice for the students but as genuine assistance for the communities. As the methods changed over the years, this aspect was reinforced, for example with the introduction of tools such as ‘participatory learning and action’.

The CETC radio station

‘Bula and welcome to Community FM95.2.’

Those are the first words that you will hear when visiting or tuning in to our station. Our station has been running since it was opened in 1999 and a unique thing about the station is that all the announcers are from different Pacific Island countries and every year there is a new set of voices.

For this year there are 24 ladies in the Radio Elective programme. This is the largest group we have ever had. This group is taught how to:

- announce on air
- operate the on-air machines
- conduct and record interviews
- edit their recordings
- write jingles, station IDs, radio spots and radio talks
- and much more.

...In our programme we have Pacific Islands music, news and weather, interviews, radio talks, jingles and station IDs, recipes and dedications.

Timaleti Rokotavaga in a newsletter article in 2003.
38 – Changing women, changing communities, changing the Pacific: Five decades of SPC's CETC

4.14
According to one student in 2009, “COP 1 was an inspiration for our team as we learned and understood the process of using the participatory learning and action tools to get information about the Narere community in an exciting way. The important thing is that we shared ideas with the community and the people were happy that we were able to discuss some very important village needs that had long gone unmet and how they were able to put an action plan together to tackle the problems identified.” The emphasis was on real and useful outcomes for the communities; in 2012, “Key projects based on community needs were completed, such as rubbish stands, a bus shelter, drum oven construction and healthy lifestyle approaches, while income generation projects were initiated on poultry, vegetables and catering.”

The move to an accredited formal training programme

CETC led the way in the region in training women in community development, leadership and practical skills. When the course was established in the 1960s it was the only one of its kind in the Pacific. As national educational systems developed, however, courses with similar elements began to appear – some set up by former students and modelled on the Centre’s course.

For the course designers, this meant aligning the curriculum with these newly available courses, and ensuring that the Centre continued to exploit its comparative advantages. The aim was to complement and add to these courses rather than duplicate, and this led to the Centre’s redefinition as a regional Centre of Excellence.

From the later 1990s there was also a call for the course to be officially accredited, so that students graduated with a recognised qualification. This was articulated in the 2002 external review: “The present CETC programme, while broad and practical, appears not to fit into any existing accreditation or apprenticeship scheme. Its absence from such schemes in part reflects the general lack of accreditation for any practical vocational-level courses and the lack of recognition of the need for community development training. It seems that, for optimal results, an accreditation scheme should be worked out nationally and linked to existing certificate courses.”

These two issues drove curriculum changes in the final years of the Centre’s life. The staff team from the mid-2000s, under the leadership of Lia Maka, undertook a complete redesign of the community development programme to convert it to a competency-based modular format with appropriate levels and credits assigned. The programme was renamed Certificate in Applied Community Development Studies and was offered at both Level II and Level III.
Accreditation was sought from the newly established Fiji National Qualification Authority, and official registration was granted in 2010 – the Centre being the first educational institution to be registered in Fiji. The redesign also facilitated distance learning, and in 2012 a trial of the distance education modules was conducted in Vanuatu and Fiji.

The Business Development Advisory Programme

In the last decade of the Centre’s life, a second annual programme was developed in response to increasing demand for training in entrepreneurial skills and business support services.

The course arose out of a summer training-of-trainers course that first ran in 2004. It was formally launched in 2008, and described in the Community Training Update newsletter: “Two weeks after the participants of the seven-month training programme departed, CETC was once again a hive of activity. Twenty-five participants, mostly holding senior training or executive positions in agencies working on enterprise or youth development from five countries (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa and Kiribati) undertook a two week training on Start to Improve Your Business for the youth sector.”

Subjects covered by the programme included finance, marketing, market research, product design and development, product innovation, quality control and standards, service delivery, networking and advocacy. The training followed an ‘incubator’ approach, with both virtual and face-to-face mentoring in targeted areas.

Other courses

Besides the two annual programmes, CETC ran many shorter courses through the years, both at the Centre and as in-country training,
The Centre staff endeavoured to provide courses wherever there was a need, and sought the most cost-effective ways of doing so. In 1978 a mobile training unit was established to facilitate this, although funding restricted its use after the first few years. In later years, the Centre adopted a cost-sharing approach, with the host country or agency covering costs while the Centre provided the expertise.

Short courses included refresher courses for graduates, as well as courses for students whose commitments meant they could not attend the long programme in Suva. Some short courses were conducted in local languages, further broadening the student reach.

**Striving for continual improvement – programme evaluation**

Evaluation was built into the Centre’s activities from the beginning. As soon as the first cohort of students returned home, an annual country visit programme began. Staff toured the region to see how the students were putting their new skills into practice, and to gather opinions from them and others on how the course might be improved. At the Centre, the current students were also involved in ongoing course evaluation.

The Centre also occasionally carried out formal internal reviews, such as in 1978 when Margaret Crowley was among those invited to help in an evaluation workshop.

These ongoing evaluations led to gradual changes to the course content over time. More significant revisions of the course were made in response to external reviews, which attempted to align the course with broader development trends in the region. External reviews were published in 1983, 1993, 2002 (with a ‘review of the review’ in 2004), 2008 and 2012.

The course also responded to guidance from regional meetings such as the South Pacific Conference and the Committee of Regional Governments and Administrations. In 1981 for example, according to SPC’s annual report, “In response to the mandate of previous South Pacific Conferences and other evaluations, the Centre Staff is endeavouring to alter the emphasis of the curriculum from one which focuses on the traditional role of women to one which responds to women’s role in modern Pacific societies”.

In the last decade, informal advisory groups were formed to help direct the curriculum, drawing on expertise at SPC and partners in Fiji, in areas such as agriculture, health, nutrition, gender, youth and culture.
By 2011, as part of the move to accreditation, a formal advisory group and technical subject committees were formed and had responsibility for reviewing the programme for relevance, quality and level.
CURRICULUM OUTLINE 1984

Core course I – Community development
Learning about the community; Working with the community; The community worker’s role; Community preparation; Planning development activities with community participation; Field work

Core course II – Women’s development
Women’s role and status in the community; Community development and women’s development; Women’s social problems; Women’s health needs; Women’s educational needs; Women’s economic role; The role of women’s organisations; Field work

Support studies
Personal health and hygiene; Working with groups; Basic writing, calculation, and research skills; Simple communication skills; Basic financial management; Basic nutrition; Making own resource materials; Sporting skills

Agriculture and related fields
Role of Pacific women in agricultural production; Rural development schemes and consequences for women; Difficulties in increasing women’s role in production/agricultural activities; Use of appropriate technology; Commercial crops; Field work

Home economics
Home management; Family food and nutrition; Maternal and child care; Hygiene and health care; Clothing; Home gardening; Appropriate technology; Skills in local handicrafts; Housing and household equipment; Consumer education; Income-generating activities; Education techniques; Field work

Health, food and nutrition
Health
Communicable diseases; Community health and sanitation; Family health; Non-communicable diseases; The environment: pollution and conservation of resources; First aid and accident prevention; Dental health; Mental health

Introduction to fundamental and practical aspects of human nutrition
Basic food requirements and recommended dietary allowances; Concept of a balanced meal and a balanced diet; Food requirements of babies and infants; Using local foods for young children’s diets; Nutritional needs of women, schoolchildren, adolescents, elderly; Malnutrition, vitamin and mineral deficiency diseases; Changes in the Pacific island diet, and non-communicable diseases; Food preparation, hygiene and preservation
**Curriculum outline 2005**

Five core courses in first semester (all compulsory):

**Community development**
- focusing on basic concepts and skills in community development, community resource mobilization, organization, motivation, leadership and decision-making

**Agriculture**
- focusing on knowledge and skills in a range of farming/ horticulture/animal husbandry systems that are cost-effective, sustainable and income-generating

**Food and Nutrition**
- focusing on a good understanding of the relationship between food, nutrition and health and practical application of these via cooking classes and community-based programmes

**Home Economics**
- focusing on skills and knowledge that lead to efficient management of the home and improved quality of life for the family and community

**Management**
- focusing on skills and knowledge of the processes and tasks/roles of a manager and leader in a variety of situations

**Second semester:**
Compulsory support courses and minor courses:
- Library
- Multimedia
- Health and Development
- Basic accounting for Non-accountants
- Environment

- English
- Training of Trainers
- Small Business/Micro-enterprise
- Food and Nutrition II
- Gender and development

**Electives:**
- Fisheries
- Art and Craft
- Tailoring
- Drum Oven

- Carpentry
- Catering and Hospitality
- Fabric Art
- Day Skipper’s Course

**Community Outreach Programme**
Curriculum outline 2013
[Modular, with compulsory and elective modules]

Compulsory:

**Community development**
Twenty-one modules on understanding and working with communities, and planning, developing and implementing community development projects. Includes 'Understanding processes of selection, planning and management of community-based projects', 'Applying participatory PLA and QC tools in a community project', 'Plan and conduct a community outreach programme' and 'Deliver a practical training programme in a community setting'.

**Health and nutrition**
Ten modules on health and nutrition in the Pacific, including 'Understanding food security in a Pacific community', 'Healthy family meals using local foods', 'Traditional cooking methods', and 'Knowledge of consumer rights and responsibilities'.

**Integrated agriculture**
Ten modules including 'Cultivate vegetable crops in the school garden', 'Prepare a compost heap and use in the garden', 'Use and maintain garden tools correctly', and modules on raising chickens, pigs and tilapia fish.

**OHS (Occupational health and safety)**
Single module

**Food safety**
Single module

**Food processing**
Two modules, on different preservation and processing techniques, and marketing and presentation of preserved products.

**Personal wellness**
Three modules on health and wellness in the Pacific context, physical activities, and the effects of smoking tobacco.

**Multimedia/basic graphics**
Single module

**Basic radio programming, and radio studio operations**
Two modules

Compulsory for the Enterprise Stream:

**Microenterprise**
Four modules on developing an enterprise.

**Basic accounting for non-accountants**
Three modules

**Start-your-own-business in food processing**
One module on developing a business plan for a food processing business.

Compulsory for the Management Stream:

**Integrated agriculture**
One module on marcotting and grafting.

Electives (students choose a minimum of two of the following):
- Pastries and breads
- Basic catering
- Homestay/guesthouse operations
- Tailoring
- Fabric arts
- Art and craft
- Basic paper making
46 – Changing women, changing communities, changing the Pacific: Five decades of SPC’s CETC
Chapter 5

Partner organisations

Over the years, the Centre and its work moved and inspired people from many different organisations and this was reflected in the generous support of a large number of partners. Support was given in different ways, from various types of financial support to assistance with training and other practical help.

‘Core’ funders

SPC member countries and territories were the main core funders through the years, reflecting their support for the work of the Centre and the importance they placed on women’s education for development. SPC members in 2013 were:

- American Samoa
- Cook Islands
- Federated States of Micronesia
- Fiji
- French Polynesia
- Guam
- Kiribati
- Marshall Islands
- Nauru
- New Caledonia
- Niue
- Northern Mariana Islands
- Palau

- Papua New Guinea
- Pitcairn Islands
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu
- Wallis and Futuna
- Australia
- France
- New Zealand
- United States of America
**Student sponsors**

Many organisations supported the Centre by carrying the costs of individual students. Many of these developed special relationships with the students they sponsored, following them through their training and beyond.

The Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign (which later merged with Oxfam Australia) sponsored many students through the 1960s and 1970s. During this period the group sponsored as many as 10–12 students per year. In the 1970s, the Canadian charity British Columbia Aid to Developing Countries took over as the major student sponsor, funding up to 22 students in any one year. Through the 1980s, Soroptimist International funded the majority of the students. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation also began sponsoring multiple students in the late 1970s, and the Commonwealth Secretariat remained a significant sponsor into the 2000s and was the Centre’s main sponsor in the final years.

Other groups that had a long-standing relationship with the Centre in the first three decades, sponsoring one or two students each year over several years, include the Country Women’s Association of New South Wales, the Pan-Pacific South-East Asia Women’s Association, the Council of Organizations for Relief Services Overseas and the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific. The Country Women’s Association of New South Wales continued supporting students from Papua New Guinea in the remaining decades.

The following organisations are known to have funded students enabling them to attend the Centre*:

- Allequash Foundation
- Associated Country Women of the World
- Australian Agency for International Development
- Australian Church Women
- Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign
- British Columbia Aid to Developing Countries Fund
- Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation
- Commonwealth Secretariat
- Council of Organizations for Relief Services Overseas
- Council of Soroptimist Clubs of the South-West Pacific
- Country Girls’ Association of New Zealand
- Country Women’s Association of Australia
- Country Women’s Association of New South Wales
- Country Women’s Association of UK
- Country Women’s Association of New South Wales
- Fiji Corona Society
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
- Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG
- New Zealand Catholics Overseas
- New Zealand Federation of University Women
- New Zealand Official Development Assistance
- New Zealand Aid (bilateral)
- OK Tedi Mines Ltd (PNG)
- Pan-Pacific South-East Asia Women’s Association
- Porgera Joint Venture Ltd (PNG)
- Kiribati Protestant Church
- Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary (Australia)
- Soroptimist International
Other funders

Financial assistance was provided in many other ways besides sponsoring students. Some groups donated specific items, such as training materials, sewing machines and carpentry tools. The Country Women’s Association of Australia sent up to four parcels a year with sewing related items, right up to the final year. Other partners carried major one-off costs. For example, the Government of Japan funded a new classroom and new equipment in 1996–97, as well as the new dining and kitchen facility and accommodation block in 2003. Similarly, the Government of Taiwan/ROC provided a new computer lab and computers in 1999 and an aquaculture facility in 2006.

The following organisations are known to have provided funds or donations to the Centre*:

- Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign
- Council of Soroptimist Clubs of the South-West Pacific
- Country Women’s Association of Australia
- Country Women’s Association of Papua New Guinea
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
- Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific
- Government of Great Britain
- Government of Japan
- Government of Taiwan/ROC
- Government of the United States of America
- National Council of Women of New Zealand
- New Zealand Federation of University Women
- Soroptimist Clubs of New South Wales
- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
Training partners

Approximately 50% of the training at the Centre was provided by external instructors from partner organisations, mostly Suva based. Some had very long-standing relationships with the Centre, sending staff year after year to deliver valued courses. St John Ambulance, for example, delivered courses in first aid from 1963/64 until 2006 (when first aid was removed from the curriculum).

Experts from other areas of SPC contributed to many of the courses. The Centre had a special relationship with SPC’s Regional Media Centre, which for many years provided training in audio-visual skills. Other SPC departments regularly providing expertise included Forestry, Agriculture and Community Health.

Different agencies within Fiji were also consistent contributors to the training programme throughout the 50 years. The Centre came to rely on the help of national training centres, for example the National Centre for Micro-enterprise Development and the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji for their enterprise and business development course in the later years.

As a training partner, FAO deserves a special mention. The Organization provided the home economics staff during the early years of the Centre, who helped set up and delivered the initial course. After local staff took over in the early 1970s, FAO maintained an interest in the Centre, assisting with reviews and providing technical advice through the 1970s.

The following is a list of organisations that are known to have contributed to training at the Community Education Training Centre*:

Asia Pacific Cooperative Training Centre
British Red Cross Society
East–West Centre
Fiji Institute of Technology

Fiji School of Medicine
Fiji Women’s Rights Movement
Food and agriculture Organization of the UN
South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
St John Ambulance Association
Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji
UN Women
United Nations Development Fund
University of the South Pacific
Various programmes of SPC
Volunteer organisations

Several volunteer organisations built lasting relationships with CETC, providing volunteer staff with skills and experience to complement the paid staff at the Centre. Volunteers brought expertise in areas such as home economics, health and nutrition, and computer skills. Volunteer postings were generally for one or two years.

The first two Peace Corps volunteers arrived at the Centre from the US in 1972, beginning a long-standing partnership that lasted until the Centre’s closure in 2013. The partnership was two-way, with the Centre occasionally assisting with training of Peace Corps volunteers before they took up posts in other parts of the Pacific region.

Volunteer agencies providing staff to the Centre through the years include:

- Canadian University Service Overseas
- Japan International Cooperation Agency
- US Peace Corps
- Voluntary Service Overseas

Partners in research

The Centre also worked with various research organisations through the years, helping to develop and adapt appropriate technologies which they could take to rural communities. In the 1970s, for example: “Working in collaboration with the Fiji Forestry Research Centre the Centre has made and tried out another style of charcoal stove. This model involved the use of a half a four gallon oil drum, which helps prevent cracks in the stove. Coconut fibre was added to the concrete mixture in an attempt to obtain a longer lasting and sturdier mixture. After using and experimenting with the charcoal stoves, Centre staff have compiled instructions on their use, care and maintenance and have tested recipes suitable for use on these stoves. These notes have been given to the Fiji Forestry Research Centre for its booklet on the making and uses of charcoal.”

In the last ten years, the Centre worked with other SPC programmes on product development that aimed to add value to local agricultural resources. More than 15 products were developed from local root crops, for example, in collaboration with SPC’s Facilitating Agricultural Commodity Trade programme. A joint trial was also carried out with SPC’s genetic resources programme, evaluating 26 sweetpotato varieties.

Partner lists may not be complete, and we apologise to any partners who have been inadvertently omitted. Names of organisations are given as at the time the organisation was working with the Community Education Training Centre, and these may have since changed.
6.1 Bus stop shelter built from COP 2012 project, Tuirara Community, Nasinu, Suva, Fiji.
Chapter 6

Impact and achievements

The original vision for the Centre was for it to be a force for change, with women at the heart of the change process. This remained the Centre’s vision through the decades, as the number of graduates grew and its impact gradually spread across the Pacific. In their many and diverse roles, the women have surely fulfilled Marjorie Stewart’s expectations of Pacific women empowered to contribute to their fullest to development. The changes they have brought about, at local, national and regional level, are CETC’s proudest achievements.

The work of the Centre, and its contribution to Pacific women’s empowerment through increasing access to education, has been acknowledged at the highest regional levels. For example, the Centre’s work was recognised by the Pacific Platform for Action Beijing + 15 review in 2010.

Measuring the Centre’s impact

Quantifying the impact of the Centre is challenging, particularly in view of its diverse benefits, many intangible. Nonetheless, through the years attempts have been made to capture and record this impact.

Tracer studies were used for gathering data on graduates and their work after they left the Centre. The external review in 1983 carried out the first such study, tracing the careers and activities of women from nine countries who had graduated since the start of the programme. Three further major tracer studies were undertaken: one as part of the 1993 external review (covering 1984–1992 graduates), a ‘stand-alone’ study in 2004 (covering 1992–2002 graduates), and another in 2011 (covering 2004–2010 graduates). Annual tracer studies were carried out in the last few years, from 2009.

The different tracer studies collected a range of data and information and analysed it in different ways. Results fed into the programme evaluations as well as providing information on impact. The studies found most of the graduates in new roles and taking on new responsibilities in community development.

“I am grateful that I have been through CETC. I am proud of it... I would not be in this particular position if I had not attended the Centre.” Janet Kaltovei, Vanuatu, 1975 graduate writing in 1981 when she was managing the Women in Development Programme for the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific.

“I will always be grateful to CETC for its contributions to my life. The training I received has helped me to get where I am today. I now hold the position of Executive and Consular Officer with the New Zealand High Commission office in Niue.” Annette Mokia, Niue, 2002 graduate writing in 2010.

“It is my pleasure to say thank you very much and malo aupito CETC for helping me to have the courage and confidence to work in this kind of job here in Tuvalu.” Sue Toaki, Tuvalu, 2007 graduate writing in 2010 when she was working as a Youth Mental Health Officer.

“I feel that CETC has changed my life in a way that I could never have imagined. It has made me become a respected and empowered woman in my own family, community, society, and especially in my organisation, AMAK.” Eteta Tibwere, Kiribati, 2009 graduate.

“I will be forever grateful to CETC as all the practical skills that I gained there are now my strengths in coordinating this programme...” Maria Peretiso, American Samoa, 2010 graduate writing in 2011 when she was Project Officer for the Ministry of Youth and Women’s Affairs.
For example, the 2011 tracer study of graduates from 2004 to 2010 found that, of the students who responded, 85% were in full employment and 3% in self-employment; and that 45.6% were working in civil society while 39.6% were employed by national governments.

Other qualitative data on graduates were also collected, for example through letters and e-mails written to the Centre, during country visits by Centre staff, and through surveys carried out through the newsletter or via e-mail. There is a wealth of anecdotal material gathered over the years describing the diverse activities and achievements of Centre graduates. Individual graduates were regularly featured in the Centre’s newsletters, and publications profiling graduates were also produced in later years.

Just a few of the many stories are told below, illustrating how the Centre changed the lives of the women themselves, and helped them to contribute to positive change in their communities, with ‘trickle-up’ impacts on their countries and on the Pacific region. Several of the high-profile graduates are also highlighted, as leaders and spokespeople who have carried the Centre’s message of ‘change’ to the highest levels of their communities and countries.

With these few stories, the Centre recognises and commends the work of all its graduates through the years – the more than 1700 women who completed the community development programme, and the more than 700 men and women who completed a course under the business development programme.

**Changing women**

All of the women who studied at the Centre were changed by their experience. They gained self-confidence and self-esteem, and they took away a new and valuable awareness of the diversity of the countries and cultures of the Pacific, as well as many other more individual lessons. Whatever they went on to do with their lives, they were better equipped and more resourceful as a result of their training at the Centre.

The 2008 external review carried out a small survey of students who had attended the Centre in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and summarised: Nine out of ten indicated the course had benefited them in their career, as a leader and personally... Most considered the training benefited them personally in terms of self-esteem and confidence, as well as the acquisition of a wide range of practical skills.
Changing communities, changing the Pacific

Many of the women graduates went on to fulfil the highest ambitions of the course originators. They set up new community training programmes in their own countries, and shared their new skills with other women, men and youths. Others incorporated their new knowledge into their teaching jobs and spread their skills in that way. Still others set up new enterprises and provided jobs and income, as well as skills training, for others in their communities.

Below are examples from most of the Pacific island countries that sent women to the Centre over the years. These are representative stories showing the diversity of roles and activities the women took on after leaving the Centre – to tell all the women’s stories would require a much bigger book.

**American Samoa**

Maria Peretiso graduated in 2010 and returned to American Samoa to manage the Teen Pregnancy and Teen Mothers Counselling and Rehabilitation Programme under the Ministry of Youth and Women’s Affairs. At the time of writing she was working in the area of violence against women, as a Program Assistant Coordinator.

**Cook Islands**

Tepou Rau Ford first attended the Centre in the 1990s, and returned for a refresher course in 2007, when she was the ‘outstanding student’ of the year. On her home island of Penryhn, the most remote and the largest of the Cook Islands, she has carried out many training courses over the years, on subjects including gender, domestic violence, sewing and baking.

**Fiji**

“My name is Mei Mili Tokoi and I’m from Wainibuka in the province of Tailevu, Fiji. I graduated from CETC in October 2009. I have always had this passion/dream to work in the communities especially with women but my drawback back then was that I did not have the experience and qualification to do so. Since I now have the qualification in community work, I am now a programme officer for the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprise N Development ‘FRIEND’ at our Labasa office. I work with unemployed kids to improve their self-esteem and to upskill them in diverse fields. We do workshops on awareness campaigns on poverty/Millennium Development Goals, Youth Employment Network and Governance Programme.” Mei Mili Tokoi was writing in 2010.
Federated States of Micronesia

Arisako Anicar, a 2006 graduate, returned to Pohnpei and worked with SPC’s Development of Agriculture in the Pacific project. She delivered training and extension activities to farmers and assisted communities to improve their food security and livelihoods in all states of FSM.

Carla Billy, a 2011 graduate, returned to Chuuk where she developed a healthy lifestyle project called ‘kick that fat away’, based on what she learned at the Centre. She works at the FSM Ministry of Women, and is committed to raising awareness of non-communicable diseases in her country, and helping people to develop healthier lifestyles.

Kiribati

The work of Rereiti Tooma (née Tereiti), a 1984 graduate, was reported by Nu’ufou Petaia in 2002 following a visit to Kiribati:

“Upon her return home, using the skills she acquired at CETC she started a small business sewing clothes and other household items and selling them from her home. She later trained a workforce of designers and sewers, expanded the business and went commercial in the late 1990s, to what is now known as the Kiribati Garment Factory. The factory employs more than 50 people, and this is a big operation for a small island. It is a service that produces goods needed by the community, but also provides employment and therefore an income for many people.... Amazingly, she built up this business without any other training besides what she received at CETC.”

Nauru

The Community Training Update reported this story from Nauru in 2006:

“A small group of CETC graduates has been actively involved in offering all kinds of assistance to utilise the skills, knowledge and experiences acquired from their CETC training. The group is headed by Suzie Scottie (CETC 1999) and includes Tara Detogia (CETC 2000), Tricia Roland (CETC 2002) and Magra Garoa (CETC 2005). Serina Togran, who graduated from CETC this year, has also joined the group.

The group members have assisted in training in their areas of expertise, such as fabric arts, flower arrangement, food and nutrition, kitchen garden and food security. ... These ex-CETCs are also engaged as voluntary radio announcers on the Women’s Corner, a radio programme run by the Women’s Affairs Department. ...”
New Caledonia

“My name is Marie Helene Mediara. I completed the 1997 course at CETC. After I came back to New Caledonia I worked for women’s groups, mainly on composting techniques, health and community hygiene with rubbish disposal. The course gave me a lot of practical knowledge, and valuable exchanges. Now I am continuing to work with groups of children on the environment and lots of other things. The approaches and strategies are very useful for our communities.” Marie Helene Mediara was writing in 1999.

Niue

Mrs Lapati Melipa Paka completed the very first training programme at the Centre in 1963/64. After returning home she continued to work and support women, community and the people of Niue. Her many community roles included President of the Mutalau Women’s Club, Chairperson for the Village Council of Mutalau, and Treasurer and then President of the Niue Council of Women. She received a Queen’s Service Medal for her services to the community and Niue.

Papua New Guinea

Gertrude Andrias graduated in 1997. She returned to Papua New Guinea and immediately began setting up a community women’s resource centre based on CETC. She managed to secure funding to build a classroom, and ran courses based on home economics, food and nutrition, agriculture and computer classes. By 2004, her Centre had trained more than 400 women. At the time of writing, she was still working in training in Papua New Guinea as Principal of Kingku Hi-Tech Training Institute in the Jiwaka Province.

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Ione Heine De Brum graduated from the community development programme in 1980. She had a particular interest in health and nutrition, and after returning to the Marshall Islands she dedicated herself to promoting healthy living in the communities. She held many workshops with both men and women, and wrote a recipe book featuring local foods in healthy recipes.

A member of SPC staff reported to the Centre Head on a meeting with graduates during a visit to the Marshall Islands in 2008: “I was impressed at how your graduates have been keeping themselves busy with community development work, training and teaching handicrafts and weaving. We are working collaboratively and linking with the Adolescent Health Program in Majuro. This allows weaving, gardening
and other community development work combined with learning more about family planning and other reproductive health issues; and the women get to understand better how different issues impact on the socio-economic status of their families.”

Samoa

Seletuta Visesion Pita was not only the youngest but also the most outstanding student of her year, 2003. She returned to Samoa and worked with the NGO Women in Business before being recruited by the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development as a programme officer, and later manager, for the flagship youth project Talavou. During this period she became a regional representative and champion of Pacific youth, attending many international and regional youth forums. In early 2011, Tuta was promoted to Assistant Chief Executive Officer of the Division of Youth.

Solomon Islands

Ruth Timauku graduated in 2008 and began working in community training for Oxfam. She ran courses in areas such as food and nutrition, food processing, and disaster preparedness. In 2010 she wrote: “I’m currently employed by the Solomon Islands Christian Association as a Field Supervisor, running training at the local villages in nine island provinces in the Solomon Islands. Our team has covered 126 communities.” Her work focused on disaster management and disaster risk reduction at the community level.

Tokelau

Malia Nive Wright graduated in 2007, and returned to Tokelau to work with the Fatupaepae garden project. Run by women, the project aims to encourage young people in self-help and self-reliance, as well as to encourage healthy eating based on locally grown vegetables. She went on to become the first policewoman on the island of Nukunonu. In 2010 she wrote: “Since leaving Fiji, I co-ordinated our women’s group garden ...I am very proud to say I succeeded with many good bountiful harvests, ...I had to prove to my people that I learned many things from CETC. Dr Lia, I gained confidence to be able to participate in ‘public speaking’ and in ‘devotion’ which was all new to me. Those were very big steps for me without any of you knowing it was my greatest fear. But now look where I am - proud to be Nukunonu’s first policewoman and I am going to make sure that I do a very good job of it too.”
Tonga

Taumosi Hemaloto was a CETC student of 1995. She returned home to work at the Langafonua ‘a Fafine Tonga, the umbrella organisation for women in Tonga. She returned to the Centre to take part in the new business training programme of the Centre in 2004, and again in 2007 to train as a business trainer. Back in Tonga, she became the Manager for the Langafonua Handicrafts Centre and Arts Gallery, the commercial arm of the Langafonua ‘a Fafine Tonga. Taumosi has conducted training workshops in Tonga for crafters and operators to help strengthen the quality and price of the products for her organisation and has widened her supply chain through a renewed membership drive and targeted product development initiatives.

Tuvalu

Patipati Taomia studied at the Centre in 1989 and returned home to work her way up from waitress to kitchen supervisor at the only hotel in Tuvalu. After resigning from the hotel in 2009 she set up a house rental business and also began catering commercially. The highlight for her and her community was being selected to be one of the team of chefs to cater for Prince William and his wife Kate during their visit to Tuvalu in November 2012. She is still active in Tuvalu and is president of the Senala women’s community.

Vanuatu

Rolenas Lolo studied at the Centre in 1977, and then returned to Vanuatu to become a community worker. She carried out many training courses through the years. She was appointed Head of Women’s Affairs in 1980, and later Director of the Vanuatu National Council of Women. In 2004 she was doing voluntary work on Pentecostal Island, organising women in cooperative work for income generation.

Wallis and Fortuna

Maleta Seueva graduated in 2007 and returned to work in the Department of Women as a programme assistant. She also worked to support entrepreneurship in Wallis and Futuna, developing a project for youth to make coconut oil, among other projects.
Nga Teao, Cook Islands, 1975 graduate
After graduating from the Community Education Training Centre, Nga Teao worked her way up from being Women Development Officer to being Director of the Gender and Development Division in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. At the time of writing she was Senior Welfare Inspector for Elderlies and Destitutes for the Social Welfare Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Gradel Alfred, Marshall Islands, 1977 graduate
Gradel was the first female mayor for her island, and a very successful politician and community activist until her retirement.

Kathy Solomon, Vanuatu, 1978 graduate
After graduating, Kathy worked as a trainer in a faith-based training centre, and then became a Women’s Interest Officer working for the Vanuatu Government. In 1983 she was seconded to the NGO Vanuatu National Council of Women, which she helped to develop into a major organisation. She became Director of the Vanuatu Rural Development Training Centre Association and also Chair of the Vanuatu National Training Council.

Saini Teilauea Simona, Tuvalu, 1986 graduate
Saini returned to her position of Women’s Development Officer after graduating, and her new skills meant she was soon given extra responsibilities. In 2002, she was promoted to Director of the Department of Women’s Affairs. She retired in 2012.

Lily Samson, Marshall Islands, 1990 graduate
Lily Samson returned to the Marshall Islands in 1990 and worked for some years with the community radio broadcasting programme of the Department of Community Affairs. She was promoted in 2005 to Programme Manager of the Women in Development Division. She attended a CETC COMSEC leadership and governance course in 2006 to refresh her knowledge. She is now Officer in Charge of the Women’s Training and Marketing Information Centre whilst her previous role has been taken up by another ex-student of the Centre, Ready Mack, a 2006 graduate.
Reijieli Mawa, Fiji, 1992 graduate
Reijieli Mawa went steadily up the ranks after her graduation, to the position of Principal Assistant Secretary in the Fiji Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation.

Hilda Waiyongi, Papua New Guinea, 2000 graduate
Hilda Waiyongi has moved up the ranks following her return to become the Assistant Director and Human Resources and Gender Coordinator for the Papua New Guinea Correctional Service in Port Moresby.

Taromi Solomona, Cook Islands, 2008 graduate
Taromi attended business and leadership short courses at the Centre in 2004 and 2006, and then the community development training in 2008. She was very active in community work at Manihiki, and was Deputy Registrar of the court of Manihiki, Head of the Gender, Youth and Sport Division, and a church deacon, among other roles. She was promoted to be one of the two local government island councillors in January 2011 until her death in March 2011.

Lavinia Fotofili Palei, Tonga, 2004 and 2007 business graduate
Lavinia attended two intensive business workshops at the Centre under its business development support programme. She became officer-in-charge of the National Centre for Women and Children until 2009 when she was recruited as Programme Manager by the US Peace Corps in Tonga.
6.15 and 6.17 – CETC administrative building, 2013
6.16 Drum (lali) at CETC
6.17 CETC campus
6.18 Students in their classroom 2012
Conclusion

The Pacific has changed over the last 50 years, and its women have changed. The Community Education Training Centre, its staff and its students through the years, are proud to have contributed to that change.

The Centre closed its doors in 2013, after the final community development programme ended. However, the impact of the Centre will be felt long into the future. The women and men who are graduates of the Centre are a foundation for change that is helping the people of the Pacific to move forward, confident and equipped to meet the challenges of the future. This is the Centre’s legacy.

“The Centre may be closing, but its footprint will remain at SPC. We worked with most of the different divisions through the years, enhancing their work as they supported our efforts. In fact, through this I believe our work has contributed to the concept of the multisectoral approach which is now being mainstreamed into SPC’s work. The Centre has also helped shape the evolution of SPC’s Human Development Programme, and has helped to strengthen SPC’s position on gender equality and empowerment of women, and highlighted the importance of women’s education and SPC’s role in the provision of various types of training.”

Lia Maka, the last Head of the Centre
The Community Education Training Centre played a very special role in Pacific development over five decades, from its founding in 1963 to its closure in 2013. Through its unique training programme for women, the Centre nurtured and developed the skills and leadership qualities of over 1,200 women, equipping them as agents of change at the grassroots level. After completing the residential community development course, the women took on diverse challenges, sharing their skills and empowering others within their communities and beyond. Against a backdrop of rapid change within the region, not least in terms of the role of women, the Centre’s staff, ensured that the training programme kept up with constantly changing needs. The Centre’s second main course, the Business Development Advisory Programme which ran from the early 2000s, trained more than 500 women and men in the entrepreneurial skills demanded in the present day. This publication is a celebration of the women and men, the students and the staff who passed through the Centre over the years and who contributed to the powerful force for change that the Centre represents.