ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Edmond Fehoko is descended from Kotu, Mo'unga'one, Nomuka and Ma'ufanga in the Kingdom of Tonga. The author acknowledges his origins in Ha'apai and Tongatapu, and his kinfolk in the homeland and diaspora to whom he belongs.

REFERENCES

- Bailey, O., Georgiou, M. & Harindranath, R. (2007). *Transnational lives and the media: Reimagining diasporas*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wood-Ellem, E. (2004). *Songs and poems of Queen Salote*. Tonga: Vava'u Press Limited.
- Faemani, S. (1995). The impact of remittances and rural development in Tongan villages. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 4 (1): 139-155.
- Funaki & Funaki. (2007). A compromise identity: Tongan Americans in the United States. In P. Spickard, J. Rondilla, & D. Wright (Eds.), *Pacific diaspora: Island peoples in the United States and across the Pacific*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Galley, C. (1992). A good man is hard to find: Overseas migration and the decentred family in the Tongan Islands. *Critique of Anthropology*, 12 (1): 47-74.
- Hansen, M. (2004). *The Loss and Transformation of the Tongan Culture and its Effect on Tongan American Families in Utah*. Salt Lake City, USA: Westminster College Research Journal.
- James, K. (1991). Migration and remittances: A Tongan village perspective. *Pacific Viewpoint*, 32 (1): 1-23.
- Morton, H. (1998). Creating their own culture: Diasporic Tongans. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 10 (1): 1-30.
- Niumeitolu, V. (2010). Tongan American Creation Myths. *Blackmail Press*, 31. Retrieved from <http://nzpoetonline.homestead.com/VM31.html>
- Pale, M. (2010). My Grandmother's Vision. *Pasifika Woman Blogspot*.
- Spickard, P., Rondilla, J. & Wright, D. (Eds.) (2007). *Pacific Diaspora: Island peoples in the United States and across the Pacific*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Vicens, A. J. (n.d.). Tongan man carries on his father's traditions. *We the People: Bringing the Census to Life in Arizona*, Retrieved from http://wethepeople.asu.edu/99.families_aj.html

CHAPTER 5

PACIFIC VOLUNTEERING: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Moses Faleolo

*Lecturer, School of Health & Social Services
Massey University, Albany.
m.m.faleolo@massey.ac.nz*

INTRODUCTION

The best way to present a Pacific perspective on volunteering is to provide a brief life story of a personal journey. In this chapter I talk about my experiences of willing to provide a service without pay, that was natural to me, and there was no expectation of getting any reward in return. Also, I don't define and describe my activities as 'volunteering' because it is philosophically linked to a Western history of altruism and charity and will not encapsulate ideas that come from other cultures and traditions. Instead, my volunteering journey is based on a Pacific perspective; the Samoan notion of tautua (100% commitment, service, loyalty, without question) and alofa (love, kindness, generosity, compassion). At the end however, I provide a warning for those Pacific people who practice tautua and alofa for unpaid work in governance and service provision, to be aware at all times and not be complacent. Our desire to please others without complaint but with passionate endeavour can also be to the detriment of ourselves because we may not be able to notice that we are being exploited and manipulated at the same time.

CHURCH VOLUNTEERING

My earliest memory of voluntary work (for now I will use the term "volunteer", "voluntarism", "voluntary work" interchangeably, but later you will see that these terms are critically evaluated and substituted with the terms "tautua" and "alofa") was as a member of my Samoan church. During the 1990s I was appointed Youth Leader for Bible class; I was 20 years old and responsible for a group of young people aged between 16 to 25 years old. Every Sunday I organised activities based on

a key message from the Bible ranging from games, role plays, creative dancing, singing, guest speakers, and individual-member presentations. I never thought about how young I was, just ensured that my role was performed effectively and that Bible class members got a lot of value out of their attendance.

I bought my own resources. I paid for things with the money I received from my university student allowance to enable me to teach lessons and undertake activities using learning aids. I paid for things like photocopying, gifts for members celebrating their birthdays, equipment hire such as a projector, screen, stereo, spare Bibles, and stationery. Every Saturday night I put aside at least two hours to plan for Bible class and created activities such as quizzes, role plays based on a well known television advertisement ("If you think and pray, you're not a bloody idiot"), and biblical songs based on popular tunes played often on radio ("If you wanna make a change then take a look at yourself and make that change"). I was really committed to being a Youth Leader and I put in a lot of effort without expecting anything in return.

I co-organised local and regional events. I organised carwashes and clean-up brigades to clean church members' family homes and the church itself. I ran raffles, movie nights, cultural nights and other fundraising activities. The money that was raised was used to fund events such as travelling to youth rallies, concerts, inter-denominational choir competitions, sports exchanges and camping retreats. Some of these events were local and others were regional. At a regional level I represented my Bible class and got to meet other Youth Leaders from all over New Zealand. The Synod focussed on growing a youth ministry to ensure young people maintained their Christian beliefs and interest in Samoan churches. Youth rallies were brought about to bring West, East, and South Auckland Bible classes together and featured keynote speakers. Choir competitions, talent quests, concerts, and drama performances showcased the talent available within and outside the Auckland region. Sports exchanges and camping retreats took the messages and teachings of the Bible outdoors. I had gone from organising lessons for Bible class to planning, designing and coordinating events for other Bible classes, something I never expected when I was appointed a Youth Leader.

There were times when I felt like I was being a youth worker, social worker or even a counsellor. I had no formal training or experience, but being a Youth Leader was part of the job. I remember leading a group of Bible class members to visit another member who was in hospital after having surgery. I used my parents' car to transport Bible class members and gave other members petrol money to get there. I managed to raise a small amount of money to buy a card, flowers and fruit. I put together a message of encouragement and led the singing. I even visited troubled Bible class members at their family home or some came to see me at my parents' home. I gave advice over a range of issues like family relationship breakdown, self image, temptation (sex, alcohol, drugs) and other forms of sin. I remember using my personal experiences to instil confidence and resiliency applying the Bible and prayer, even though I had very little experience. I didn't want to judge and abandon the troubled Bible class members I spoke to and shared with, and knew they needed someone to talk to, so I did my best to be there for them.

I also felt like a family worker. Again, I had no formal training or experience in dealing with parents and extended family members. Luckily I had gained a lot of respect from the parents because most of them had witnessed the work I was doing with their teenage children in the Bible class, and my own parents were one of the original founders and long serving church members. Sometimes parents asked me to explain the behaviour of their teenage children and I started advising moms and dads on how to raise their teenage children. At times it was awkward but the knowledge I shared came from conversations with my parents. I did not feel comfortable with family intervention work, but I wanted to support the parents and their teenage children by promoting the importance of talking through issues rather than using physical punishment. Besides this, I was also utilised as a mediator, translator and negotiator when the parents of my Bible class members were visited by government workers and school officials.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERING

After nearly a decade of being a Youth leader, I decided to step down and concentrate on other voluntary roles. It was time for another person to continue on with the work. The next ten years I was nominated and elected to various offices. In 2001, I was made an executive member for the Safe Waitakere Alcohol Project (SWAP). My focus shifted from

working in my own free time for my local Samoan church's youth, to local government's concern about alcohol-related harm particularly on the youth population. That same year I was nominated and elected as a steering group member for the Ranui Action Project (RAP), signalling another shift, this time to community development. Two years later I was invited to be an executive member of the National Youth Workers Collective (NYWC) which shifted my focus again, from community development to professionalism. The development and establishment of Youth work as a credible profession like nursing, social work and counselling. I remember feeling honoured because my family was elevated due to the status I had achieved. I also remember being excited because I had a chance to expand my skills through further volunteering roles which could increase my employability given that the roles provided experience in governance, directing and project management.

SAFE WAITAKERE ALCOHOL PROJECT (SWAP)

SWAP originated in the late 1990s as a community pilot programme aimed at reducing alcohol-related harm. One of SWAP's key goals was to support and promote local government or Waitakere City Council's (WCC.) strategic objectives and those expressed in the SWAP contract with the Ministry of Health. This involved two significant areas: strong community leadership on alcohol-related issues, advocacy and partnership management on behalf of WCC and its residents; and management of a specific portfolio of projects to reduce the level and likelihood of alcohol-related harm amongst residents of West Auckland. My election meant I represented a particular community group and was being moulded as a potential community leader. One of the projects I presided over was called "The Parent Pack", which contained information to help parents understand and manage issues pertaining to their teenagers and the upcoming School Balls.

I remember sitting around the table at Waitakere Police Headquarters with representatives from WCC, Liquor Licensing, Police, Schools and Alcohol Watch. We talked about what kinds of things that would be available in the Parent Pack. There was a lot of debate around having condoms inside the Parent Pack. Those against having condoms inside the Parent Pack cited moral, religious and cultural reasons, while those who supported it pointed out that it would encourage safe sex activity,

prevent unplanned pregnancies, and sexual disease transfer. In the end, representatives of schools were asked to notify parents and gauge from their reactions the issue of condoms. As a result some secondary schools accepted the idea while others rejected having condoms inside the Parent Packs. I was hoping that it would be universally rejected but I learned that there were other perspectives to consider and that their arguments were equally valid.

Although I was an executive member I wanted to have direct involvement. I offered to put together and deliver the Pack directly even though I did not have to because my role was to provide advice and consult, but I could not help it; I was used to backing up my decisions. I knew the only way that I would be happy that the Packs had met SWAP's objectives was to actually put in the effort and hard work to make the details actually happen. I also wanted the opportunity for Pacific-specific agencies such as West Auckland Pacific Island Health Fono (operating as Pasifika Healthcare at the time) to lead this important project because it would enhance their profile and the community would see the healthcare provider actually doing something about the effects of alcohol on the Pasifika community in West Auckland. Accordingly, the Parent Packs were assembled at Pasifika Healthcare, which was the first time this had been done.

The Parent Pack was to contain a lot of information. Inside was things about responsible alcohol consumption, responsible travelling tips, looking out for one another, anti-violence messages, anti-drug and alcohol messages, safe sex messages, McDonalds and Pak n Save vouchers, and some of the information was translated in Samoan and Tongan languages. I travelled to various destinations to uplift the information from participating sponsors and community agencies like Community Alcohol Drug Services (CADS.), Police stations, Altered High, and Ministry of Health. I travelled to various West Auckland secondary schools and marketed the packs as well as recruited representatives as part of the assembly and delivery crew. I contacted the local newspaper, "Western Leader", to see if they would be interested in doing a story about this and they did. I gave each school representative a voucher from McDonalds and Pak n Save for their help and for distributing the Packs to fifth-formers and sixth-formers of their schools to take home to their parents.

RANUI ACTION PROJECT

In 2001, the government at the time sought to identify communities, either geographically based, kin based or ethnically based, that were experiencing social and material disadvantage (Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, 2000). These communities were likely to benefit significantly from both the availability of funding, and from the social cohesion arising from participation in the decision making process. Ranui, a suburb in West Auckland, was one of nine Stronger Communities Action Fund (SCAF) sites nationwide, which was chosen and initially funded by Child Youth and Family Services and the Ministry of Health, and then later became jointly funded by the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Health. The Ranui Action Project (RAP) was tasked with improving health and wellbeing outcomes for the Ranui community and initiated a range of community-driven projects including the Ranui Market, Radio Ranui, Youth development, partnerships such as Housing Advocacy and Support, and events like the Ranui Whānau Fun Day annual festival, providing the Ranui Achievers Profile awards and distributing a regular 'RAP RAVE' newsletter highlighting positive people and activities in Ranui.

I was nominated and elected as a steering group member for RAP and along with others charged with the responsibility of deciding how and where the SCAF was to be spent. We were foundation members and at our inaugural meeting we elected a chairperson and a priority list was developed. From this list specific portfolios were allocated to each foundation member. Three Pacific people and I were tasked with working out what Pacific peoples in Ranui needed the most and the strategies for an action plan. Two of us focused on youth development and fortunately some young people came to the inaugural meeting so we utilised them to form a Ranui Action Project Youth Group (RAPYG). We tasked members of RAPYG to invite more young people so representation was more diverse. I was not the type of volunteer that sat around meeting tables and wanted to do more, especially since RAP was in its beginning stages. I remember travelling to all the churches (every denomination and ethnicity) and schools in the Ranui area to promote RAP and RAPYG. I spoke to ministers, church officials, youth leaders, principals and other school staff about opportunities for funding and how their contribution would add to Ranui becoming a

great place. It took me over a month or so, mostly during in the evenings and weekends, but I believed that it was necessary in order to make sure the RAP started off well.

Six months after RAPYG was formed it hosted the first social and talent quest at my church which attracted over a hundred young people and showcased the talent of some who braved it on the stage. I completed an application form on behalf of RAPYG to access RAP funds to pay for the venue, refreshments, prizes, decorations, printing, photocopying and PA system. I created teams from members of the RAPYG who looked after specific areas of the event. I offered to DJ (disc jockey) the event and supplied my own equipment including lighting and crystal ball. Others provided food and drinks. Some put together hampers and made cards from computers to be prizes. I helped out with security, ushering, master of ceremony, cleaning and washing of dishes. I counted, bagged and secured the money that was raised which was split between my church and the RAP later on. A modest payment was made to my church as a mealofa (gift) for the use of the carpark and all the facilities (kitchen, hall, meeting rooms, chapel, restrooms, chairs), and although RAP was a not-for-profit incorporated society, the money was recycled in the community.

I was directly involved in various areas of voluntary work. Apart from being allocated the Pacific peoples and Youth development portfolios I also inherited the Policy portfolio. I co-authored the RAP Constitution and Policies, which was the initial time I had experienced what it was like to put together a mission statement, key objectives, principles, terms of references and policies like employment contracts. It was the first time I became drawn into the drafting of a document other than providing verbal advice and consultation, despite having insufficient skills. Part of my role included visiting and talking to Ranui community leaders, government agencies, health providers, volunteer groups and staff from Waitakere City Council about their thoughts on a constitution and policies for Ranui. The general consensus centered on improving the health and wellbeing outcomes in Ranui by inspiring people to believe in themselves, others, and the Ranui community. The promoted outcomes would be they could work and grow together to bring about positive changes in their lives and others.

NATIONAL YOUTH WORKERS COLLECTIVE

In 2003, I met John Harrington, who was then the national coordinator of the National Youth Workers Collective (NYWC), and invited to be an executive member. The origins of NYWC began with a meeting between a small group of youth workers led by John and Paul Curry, the Manager of the Community Development Group of the Department of Internal Affairs, and Anne Carter, CEO of the Ministry of Youth Affairs. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the development of youth work by getting out and about the country to engage youth worker networks with the intention of connecting them, and assisting them to build capacity and ultimately, be recognised as a profession like nursing, counselling and social work.

Once again, I encountered similarities in a new role to when I was with RAP. I became a foundation member but instead of being part of developing a strong and vibrant community, the focus of my new role with NYWC was being part of the establishment of youth work in New Zealand. One of the challenges facing youth work was its perception as an activity that is largely voluntary and unpaid, compared with social work, which included working for children and young people that was mainly paid work and to a lesser extent voluntary. I was the lone voice for West Auckland youth and had no youth group backing or membership. But I needed to form one so my voice could represent a collective spirit than an individual cause. I started contacting all my acquaintances, hired one of the rooms from my local church, got access to some monies for refreshments, gifts and equipment, facilitated and spoke publicly about the importance of youth work, collected information and business cards to build a database and directory, and generated financial support from McDonalds Lincoln Road, Pak n Save Lincoln Road, Project K, and Pasifika Healthcare as potential sponsors. As a result the meeting was a success because from this I managed to form West Auckland's own youth workers collective (WAYWC) to act as a member of NYWC. I recall feeling relieved now that I had a group of youth workers to go to for advice and guidance because that's what I was used to in voluntary work, and more importantly what I utilised as a strategy (collaboration and collectivisation) for presenting solutions. If it was not for my previous voluntary roles (SWAP & RAP), I would not have been able to form WAYWC.

I participated in my very first national research project. I chose to act outside of my executive position and work directly with people and the project. Over six hundred self-identified youth workers from throughout Aotearoa New Zealand were approached using the youth worker networks, like WAYWC, to facilitate the filling-out of surveys. I arranged for the attendance of a few WAYWC members to one of the fifty-six focus groups, which was done as a Road Show, and attracted three hundred and seventeen youth workers, to form part of the elicited data for the research. I used my annual leave and travelled to various West Auckland suburbs to present to youth groups the merits of this research project. I distributed the surveys, ran focus groups and collected and collated the surveys and tape recordings. I prepared the information on behalf of WAWYC and sent them through to the research team at NYWC. This research project became the largest ever attempted in New Zealand and its findings catalysed the establishment of youth work as a credible profession.

LESSONS ON VOLUNTEERING

The brief life story about my personal journey as a voluntary worker raises and highlights three important lessons. Firstly, the view that I did not think that the services I provided was beyond voluntary work and volunteering. The work I gave so willingly and without pay was tautua (100% commitment, service, loyalty, without question) and alofa (love, kindness, generosity, compassion). The tautua and alofa, for me, were formal and informal activities (see Ministry of Social Development, 2002a, p. 1; Tamasese, Parsons, Sullivan, & Waldegrave, 2010, p. 52).

The formal activities, I was engaged, were as an executive member for NYWC in a government-driven initiative. This initiative built the capacity between government agencies and Pacific communities, in particular, Pacific youth work professionalisation where I acted in a variety of roles: as an intermediary, facilitator, adviser, negotiator and translator. Another formal activity I did was to be an executive member for SWAP where I served on as a governance member providing advice. I became directly involved in assembling and distributing the Parent Packs when it was not expected of me. Moreover, when as a steering group member for RAP, I carried out unpaid activities on behalf of a community group or a community driven initiative including the drafting of a new constitution and policies.

The informal activities I participated in were unpaid care-taking roles for groups of youth. This included activities like leading the Bible class, providing transport and home visits for church members, arranging community gatherings, support, and providing mentoring support. My life story account of volunteering is not about being a volunteer or voluntary work. It is about the transfer of tautua and alofa from when I was a Youth leader to groups such as SWAP, RAP and NYWC. I transferred my cultural knowledge as a Youth Leader (tautua and alofa) to project manage social issues like alcohol awareness, community development of low decile areas such as Ranui, and the professionalisation of youth work into a reputable industry.

Another lesson learnt from my life story account of volunteering is the difference between Western and Pacific understandings of the term "volunteer". The term "volunteer" is a Western concept and not a Pacific one (Department of Internal Affairs, 2001; Millar, 2004; Robinson & Williams, 2001; Tamasese et al, 2010; Te Momo, 2003). In Millar's (2004) analyses of "gift-exchanges" in Melanesian culture, he finds that different cultures use different lenses to view volunteering. Assuming volunteering is conceptually linked to a Western narrative of philanthropy and benevolence, it will not encase ideas that come from other cultures and traditions that rest within a web of social relationships that are centred on notions like obligation and reciprocity, that are more face-to-face, and which always focus on the community rather than the individual. When I brought resources and stationery for the Bible class, it was because I wanted to bring to life the stories in the Bible through role playing and games, rather than just merely reading and reviewing. At teachers meetings, I did not ask for reimbursement nor mentioned it because for me it was inappropriate. I was taught that being a Samoan meant not to expect anything in return for work that as been done and if I asked for reimbursement shame would have been brought upon me and my family, which was not the fa'asamoa way or the Samoan way of thinking and behaving (Faleolo, 2009; Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000).

During research conducted by Robinson and Williams (2001), the Pacific perspective emerged clearly as that of a village. There were expectations that all would work together for the good of the whole, and be generous in gifting time and resources. This was seen as enhancing the whole village's status (Robinson & Williams, 2001). The dichotomy

between the Western and Pacific perspective is clear from the following participant's statement:

I do voluntary work for Age Concern – get offered money for petrol. To me there is no need for payment; I do it for love. I learn a lot from elderly people, share their culture, so I learn how to live in New Zealand. I look after my troubled nephew and get offered a benefit. I was raised in a family that doesn't expect payment. The only work I'm not paid for is when I visit in the hospital. Maybe we have to make our own definitions (Robinson & Williams, 2001, p. 65).

It was this (the gifting of time and resources) kind of attitude and others like the Samoan notion of tautua and alofa that separates the Pacific perspective from a Western one. Although, an executive member and steering member, it was clear that my main task was to provide advice, direction, governance and consultation. Yet I went beyond these responsibilities and added more like organising local and regional events, pastoral and counselling work (youth work and social work), public speaking and marketing, drafting and writing a constitution and employment contract, and distributing and collating research information. No one asked me to do these things. Instead a choice was made by me and I chose to do it. My motivation stemmed from my upbringing as a Samoan performing work out of tautua and alofa. This is what separates the Western perspective of voluntarism from the Pacific perspective.

The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) report on volunteering sums up the questions around the term voluntary and finds a Pacific perspective which is unique and different to what the term voluntarism has been traditionally portrayed. It states:

The term 'volunteering' did not have meaning for Pacific peoples because, from a young age, all family members were trained to help and were expected to participate in community activities. Exchanging services at different times was seen as the basis of that participation. Pacific families looked to their extended family for support for projects. A person's status in the community also was a factor in getting people to assist with projects. High expectations were placed on family members to complete a task and fewer people had to carry the load of providing a pathway for others (DIA, 2001, p. 19).

It was natural for me to provide a service without payment or a reward. In hindsight, I wasn't trained to help at a young age in the formal sense. Rather I was shown, or observed how others like my parents behaved at church, in their workplace, and over other family members' homes and followed their behaviours. My dad was appointed Treasurer of the church twenty-seven years ago and we still attend it today. Even though he is a matai (high chief), the role to collect the money from free will offerings, count it, put it in bags, and bank it the next available weekday is a task he performs. He does not have a committee. And to be accountable to church members, he presented financial reports that were prepared by him, photocopied and distributed the information, in his own time. Although, retired for three years, when he worked full time his responsibilities to the church were achieved after work, and at the same time, look out for his children, do household chores and payments. During his time as Treasurer, he was never been paid, or compensated for the resources. The enormity of his work was great, for example he had to photocopy fifty-seven sets of financial reports that at times numbered up to twenty and he distributed them to the church and met the cost himself. The bedroom became an office with a giant filing cabinet that held decades of church accounts including monthly electrical, water, phone and rate payments, desks and chairs. To keep up with the current roles he enrolled himself into an accounting and payroll courses to perform his role efficiently and productively. He never missed preparing the minister's monthly stipend, and it is Dad's work that led to the establishment of the \$2.5 million church, hall, conference rooms, preschool and car park that was opened in 1996. Watching my dad, his tautua and alofa toward his Treasurer role, has "trained" me into approach my responsibilities in the same way.

The final lesson of my life story is balancing commitments. Volunteering requires a person to be conscious of the need to temper tautua and alofa, and for me, one can become susceptible to exploitation and manipulation without even knowing it. While it is important to put forward the need to recognise the difference between the Pacific and Western notion of volunteering, it is also equally important that the Pacific notion of voluntary work like tautua and alofa is not then taken for granted. Te Momo (2003) found that this is what happened to Māori concepts that substituted for the Western notion of voluntarism such as manaakitanga (caring and sharing with others), whanaungatanga

(relationship, kinship, sense of family connection), awahi (assist, help, support) and aroha (love, respect, sympathy). They became misrepresented and created further collective burdens rather than collective gain. She argued that societies such as Māori and Pacific where unpaid work is part of the value system and practice (as it is so prevalent in Māori and Pacific communities), governments cynically and knowingly exploit these values and behaviours and abdicate their own responsibility toward certain groups within society. If I provide services willingly and without pay, not expecting in return and prepared to act outside of my calling (Youth Leader, Executive member, Steering Group member), then it is of my own free will with minimal government intervention or support because government has devolved its social responsibility onto people like me.

Te Momo (2003) is warning Māori and Pacific peoples against complacency. The reason I undertook tasks outside of my brief was to ensure things would get done properly. But this eagerness would distract me from noticing whether the extra work I was doing was actually a blessing in disguise for the organisations, boards, and services in the role of an executive or steering committee member. When looking back at the journey travelled there were times when I thought about the extent of my involvement. I was a Youth Leader for nearly 10 years and there were occasions when Bible class members expected to be entertained when they attended and became reluctant to participate when I asked for volunteers. When I met with the Minister to discuss concerns with how Bible class was going and the behaviour of a few of the members, I felt he was listening to make me feel comfortable but did not really do anything about it. When I resigned there still was no photocopier, computer, stereo, stationary, whiteboard, and other equipment that I requested. It seemed he was thinking that as long as there was someone to look after the youth of his ministry he would be able to concentrate on other issues. Upon reflection, I never thought that the church I grew up in would exploit and manipulate me.

I still remember the words of welcome to me into the SWAP, RAP and NYWC environment. The words were: "Now we have a Pacific perspective". This statement meant a lot of things and when I was asked to provide a Pacific perspective about a social issue related to alcohol or community development or youth work, occasionally I

would be nervous. This is because there were a lot of Pacific people I would be speaking for, and wondered if I actually had the mandate to do that although I was nominated and elected to the role of executive and steering committee member. I think back and question, of those who voted, how many were Pacific? Sometimes when it came to public forums it was the Chairperson, the Director, and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who did the talking on behalf of the group except for situations when Pacific people in the audience would offer a question or challenge. Suddenly my presence was acknowledged and without preparation asked to intervene. There were incidents where I was asked to rescue a situation to prop-up the CEO who could potentially be made to look silly for not knowing the Pacific initiatives planned within his or her own organisation.

CONCLUSION

The best way to present a Pacific perspective on volunteering, for me, is to provide a brief life story of a personal journey. My experience of offering a service without pay was normal and natural and reciprocity was not expected. It was unnecessary to define and describe my activities as "volunteering" because it is philosophically linked to a Western history of altruism and charity, and does not encapsulate ideas that come from other cultures and traditions. Instead, my volunteering journey is based on a Pacific perspective; the Samoan notions of tautua (100% commitment, service, loyalty, without question) and alofa (love, kindness, generosity, compassion). In the latter parts, I provide a warning for those Pacific people who practice tautua and alofa for unpaid work in governance and service provision, to be aware at all times and not be complacent. Our desire to please others without complaint but passionate endeavour can also be to the detriment to ourselves because we may not be able to notice that we are being exploited and manipulated at the same time.

In conclusion, the reason I provided a service without seeking payment is because of the way I have been brought up in Samoan culture. I do not refer to the activity as volunteering because wherever I go whether it's the family home (as a son or brother), or the workplace (as an employer or employee), or the church (as a Youth Leader), or on a governance committee (as an executive or steering group member), I always draw

on tautua and alofa. Volunteering is who I am as a person, a Samoan, and doing what is natural for me.

A volunteer can be someone who is expecting something in return like a social work student undertaking fieldwork placement, a legal requirement, completion of this task would be a step toward becoming a social worker. Or a volunteer can be someone who acts in accordance to his or her role and does not consider going beyond this for whatever reason, like a social work student who sees a problem that he or she can remedy but keeps a distance claiming they are only social work students. This to me is not volunteering because I would not expect anything in return and not limit my services.

Voluntarism is not black and white and there are many grey areas. I am not arguing that voluntary activity is a waste of time, but there is a difference between the Western and Pacific notions of volunteering and voluntary work. This brief life story outlined the varied experiences I have demonstrated volunteering from a Pacific perspective and the fundamental and practical differences. Whether it is in the sacrifice remains to be seen because I know of a lot of non-Pacific people who have used their own money to pay for resources and other things like I did. This includes time spent travelling and petrol costs, planning, coordination, public speaking, networking, managing, and other forms of direct involvement which I believed set me apart from being a volunteer because I preferred a blended approach of governance and implementation.

It is acknowledged that the skills, contacts, and knowledge I possess evolved from my tautua and alofa approach. For instance, acting in the capacity of a social worker and family worker when I was a Youth Leader for my church, promoting the Parent Pack to prospective sponsors, writing a constitution and policy document, and supporting a national research project, was achieved without previous experience, formal training and qualifications. It gave me a lot of experience. My father also didn't have any experience, training and qualifications and still managed to be treasurer for many decades, oversee the establishment of new church, preschool, hall, and manse. I wonder who he watched in Samoa, and maybe it was his father and learnt from him. My father educated me in knowing how to serve willingly, without compensations, or expecting anything in return. I learnt to serve over and above my

calling and continue the culture of being Samoan, Pacific people living in New Zealand. We are not volunteers and we don't do voluntary work. We are servants and we serve out of love.

REFERENCES

- Clark, J. S. (1997). *Welfare restructuring in New Zealand: The changing relationship between the State and Auckland's voluntary welfare sector*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Auckland, New Zealand: Department of Geography, University of Auckland.
- Cnaan, R. A., Handy, F., & Wadsworth, M. (1996). Defining who is a volunteer: Conceptual and empirical considerations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 25 (3): 364-383.
- Cordingley, S. (2000). The definition and principles of volunteering: A framework for public policy. In J. Warburton, & M. Oppenheimer (Eds.). *Volunteers and volunteering*, (pp. 73-83). Sydney, Australia: The Federation Press.
- Department of Child, Youth and Family Services. (2000). *Supporting stronger communities: Options for devolving Child, Youth and Family funding to communities*. Wellington, New Zealand: Report to the Minister of Social Services and Employment, Department of Child, Youth and Family Services.
- Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) (2001). *Report of the Ministerial Reference Group for International Year of Volunteers 2001*. Wellington, New Zealand: Department of Internal Affairs. Retrieved from: [http://www.community.dia.govt.nz/Pubforms.nsf/URL/IntYrVol.PDF/\\$file/IntYrVol.PDF](http://www.community.dia.govt.nz/Pubforms.nsf/URL/IntYrVol.PDF/$file/IntYrVol.PDF)
- Faleolo, M.M. (2009). Culturally valid social work education: A Samoan perspective. In C. Noble, M. Henrickson & I.Y. Han (Ed.). *Social work education: Voices from the Asia Pacific*, (pp. 149-172). Victoria, Australia: The Vulgar Press.
- Millar, M.G. (2004). *A rationale for the application of 'gift-exchange' paradigm to volunteering by nonprofit organisations in a Melanesian culture*. Retrieved from: http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/dynamic/infobase/pdf/2004/041011_aus_png.pdf
- Ministry of Social Development. (2002a). *Volunteering and Pacific peoples*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Social Development.
- Ministry of Social Development. (2002b). *Volunteering and tangata whenua (Māori)*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Social Development. Retrieved from: <http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/work-areas/sector-policy/community-and-government/volunteering-and-pacific-peoples.pdf> (for both 2002a and b)
- Mulitalo-Lauta, P.T.M.T (2000). *Fa'asamoa and social work within the New Zealand context*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press Limited.
- Report of the Community-Government Relationship Steering Group. (2002, August). *Hewaka kotua: Joining together on a shared journey*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Social Policy. Retrieved from: <http://www.dsw.govt.nz/documents/publications/sector-policy/he-waka-kotua-part-3.pdf>

Robinson, D. & Williams, T. (2001). Social capital and voluntary activity: Giving and sharing in Māori and non-Māori society. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, 17: 52-71.

Smith, D. H. (1994). Determinants of voluntary association participation and volunteering: A literature review. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 23 (3): 243-263.

Smithies, R. (2001). *Volunteering in New Zealand: A data review*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Social Development.

Statistics New Zealand. (2001). *Measuring unpaid work in New Zealand 1999*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.

Suggate, D. (1995). *An overview of the voluntary sector*. Wellington, New Zealand: Department of Internal Affairs.

Tamasese, T.K., Parsons, T.L., Sullivan, G., & Waldegrave, C. (2010). *A qualitative study into Pacific perspectives on cultural obligations and volunteering*. Wellington, New Zealand: The Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit.

Te Momo, O. H. F. (2003). *Demystifying a relationship between voluntary work and Māori*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Hamilton, New Zealand: University of Waikato.

Warburton, J., & Mutch, A. (2000). Volunteer resources: Will people continue to volunteer in the next century? In J. Warburton, & M. Oppenheimer (Eds). *Volunteers and volunteering*, (pp. 32-43). Sydney, Australia: The Federation Press.