

**Pacific Indigenous Peoples Preparatory meeting for the  
World Conference on Indigenous Peoples  
19 - 21 March 2013, Sydney Australia**

**Agenda Item: Education**

---

**Paper submitted by the Indigenous Peoples Organisation (IPO) Network of Australia - prepared by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (Aboriginal Corporation)<sup>1</sup>.**

---

**Introduction**

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC AC) through the IPO wishes to propose Education as a priority theme for discussion at the Pacific Preparatory Meeting.

The right to Education is enshrined within the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Articles (14 – right to control education systems; own languages; cultural methods of teaching and learning; all levels and forms of state provided education without discrimination; state provided access. 15 – diversity cultures, histories, traditions and aspirations reflected in education. 17 – protection of children’s education, importance to empowerment. 21 – improvement to economic and social conditions in education. 31 – maintain, control, protect and develop Indigenous Knowledges) contain specific relevance to Indigenous peoples’ access, participation and success in education.

**Issues**

**1. Indigenous Peoples participation in Education in the Pacific Region**

Whilst improvements in education have been secured over time, Indigenous peoples in the Pacific do not enjoy equality in access, participation and outcomes across all education stages and across all Pacific nation states. The education provided by states to Indigenous peoples continues to ignore our languages, cultures, traditions, histories, development and aspirations at all levels.

**2. Link between Education and other Socio-economic Indicators**

Increased educational success positively impacts our participation across a range of socio-economic indicators including health, justice, housing and employment. Pacific nation states continue to support and implement reactionary policies aimed the characteristics of what is viewed as the Indigenous problem. This approach fails to combat underlying systemic inequalities and recognise our strengths and contributions. The investment

---

<sup>1</sup> The NATSIHEC (AC) is a registered Indigenous Peoples’ Organization within the Civil Society Network of the United Nations. The organization currently participates under its former name The National Indigenous Higher Education Network (NIHEN), Australia.

into greater control and surveillance of Indigenous peoples neglects Indigenous led solutions. This leadership is made possible through education.

### **3. Education as key driver of Indigenous Peoples' Self Determination**

Education can drive current and future self-determination by facilitating access to decision making in public and private sectors controlling our lives. Education leads to Indigenous empowerment. As Indigenous peoples, our agency for enacting, protecting and promoting our self-determination increases in direct proportion with our educational participation and success.

### **4. Education and Protection of Indigenous Knowledges**

The protection, preservation and promotion of Indigenous Knowledges within the Education sector are one of the fastest growing agendas for Indigenous peoples across the world. The scholarship and leadership of Indigenous Knowledges by Indigenous peoples for our communities and future generations, needs to be elevated within education systems across all sectors. This should be measured through setting targets and KPIs to evaluate the success and impact of this priority.

## **Recommendations**

We recommend that:

1. The NATSIHEC AC through the IPO recommends that the Pacific Preparatory Meeting propose Education as a priority theme for discussion at the WCIP.
2. NATSIHEC be referenced in the IPO papers as the organization mandated with the responsibility for preparing this document and for speaking to issues pertinent to Indigenous education at the forthcoming Pacific forum.