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Samoa: a major challenge to the education system

Samoa is a low middle-income country with a small population of less than a million. It consists of eight islands in the Pacific – two large and six small – and has a single system of societal organisation and language. The country identifies

Samoa... identifies boys' underachievement as a major challenge facing its education system.

boys' underachievement as a major challenge facing its education system. This piece discusses the nature of the problem, followed by the analysis of a vocational education initiative that is viewed as having helped in addressing the issue.

THE NATURE OF BOYS' UNDERACHIEVEMENT

A perusal of Tables 14 and 15 suggests that girls and boys are almost at par in terms of participation at the primary stage of schooling. Table 14 indicates that girls were at a slight disadvantage as compared to boys till the beginning of this century when the trend changed in their favour. However, the latest data for 2004 shows parity, and the gap on either side has not been significant. But the story is different for the secondary level of education. Participation rates have consistently been higher for girls, the gap being quite significant and somewhat widening over time. Participation rates for girls remain low, generally less than

50 per cent during the period 1995-2004, but the rates for boys are lower. In other words, boys have lower participation rates within a scenario of low overall participation at the secondary level.

TABLE 14: PERCENTAGE PRIMARY NET ENROLMENT RATIO, 5-14-YEAR-OLDS, 1995-2004, SAMOA

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
MALE	87	86	86	86	85	87	81	83	84	85
FEMALE	87	84	84	84	83	85	83	85	85	85
TOTAL	87	85	85	85	84	86	82	84	84.5	85

Source: Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 2004c.

TABLE 15: PERCENTAGE SECONDARY NET ENROLMENT RATIO, 15-19-YEAR-OLDS, 1995-2004, SAMOA

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
MALE	33	34	34	35	37	35	37	35	39	38
FEMALE	39	39	42	41	45	40	45	43	51	48
TOTAL	36	36	37	38	41	38	41	39	44	43

Source: Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 2004c.

Examinations results are analysed next to see whether under-participation of boys is also coupled with underperformance. Taking into account the examination structure followed by the national system, four examinations results are used here as measures of educational performance. These are the Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level (SPELL) One test for Year 4, the SPELL Two test for Year 6 and the National Year 12 Examination. At primary school level, the SPELL Tests for Years 4 and 6 were established and designed to identify and monitor students who are not achieving minimum competencies in both literacy and numeracy in schools. The results are recorded as an 'at-risk percentage' across government schools. Most non-government schools also participate.

Tables 16 and 17 show that a significantly higher proportion of boys have been at risk at the end of Year 4 as well as Year 6 in comparison to girls for all three subjects that are covered at this stage: English, Samoan and numeracy.

The situation is not encouraging for either girls or boys but it seems that boys are particularly weak in English and numeracy, more than two thirds having been identified as being at risk at the end of the Year 6 examinations.

TABLE 16: PERCENTAGE OF PRIMARY STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS AT RISK, YEAR 4, SAMOA

SUBJECT	GENDER	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
ENGLISH	BOYS	37	37	29	18	55	61	19
	GIRLS	22	20	17	11	41	41	8
	TOTAL	29	28	23	15	48	51	13
SAMOAN	BOYS	49	50	40	26	40	39	39
	GIRLS	28	31	26	15	23	20	19
	TOTAL	31	40	33	21	32	29	28
NUMERACY	BOYS	37	33	30	29	33	40	40
	GIRLS	24	22	24	19	24	25	25
	TOTAL	30	38	27	24	28	32	32

Source: Government of Samoa, 2005c.

TABLE 17: PERCENTAGE OF PRIMARY STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS AT RISK, YEAR 6, SAMOA

SUBJECT	GENDER	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
ENGLISH	BOYS	67	69	51	60	63	68	69
	GIRLS	44	48	35	36	38	42	44
	TOTAL	53	58	46	48	50	55	56
SAMOAN	BOYS	25	28	24	23	27	24	17
	GIRLS	8	10	11	10	11	7	12
	TOTAL	15	19	17	16	19	16	12
NUMERACY	BOYS	70	69	66	61	68	77	76
	GIRLS	54	53	51	50	56	64	58
	TOTAL	61	60	58	56	62	71	67

Source: Government of Samoa, 2005c.

Given these trends at primary level, the results at the end of Year 8 do not come as a surprise. Table 18 shows that in all subjects examined in 2001, 2002 and 2004, the boys' mean score has remained below the 50 per cent mark. Female students on the other hand had their mean score above the national average of 50 per cent at around 53 and 54 per cent in these years. This means that though girls continue to outperform boys in all subjects including science and

mathematics, the disparities in mean scores are much less when compared to the Year 6 level. However, students' performance in the Year 8 National Examination is used to select those who will enter the top five government secondary schools. As such, these results in this examination are extremely important for their "progression and future educational opportunities" (ADB, 2003).

TABLE 18: NATIONAL YEAR 8 MEAN SCORE RESULTS BY SUBJECT AND SEX, SAMOA

SUBJECT	SEX	2001	2002	2004
BASIC SCIENCE	BOYS	48	47	48
	GIRLS	53	54	53
	TOTAL	51	50	50
ENGLISH	BOYS	46	46	46
	GIRLS	54	55	54
	TOTAL	50	50	50
MATHEMATICS	BOYS	48	47	47
	GIRLS	53	53	52
	TOTAL	51	50	50
SAMOAN	BOYS	47	46	47
	GIRLS	54	54	54
	TOTAL	50	50	51
SOCIAL SCIENCE	BOYS	48	47	47
	GIRLS	53	54	53
	TOTAL	50	50	50

Source: Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture: Examiner.

Table 19 shows mean scores by subject and sex for Year 12 National Examinations for four years. Girls have either been outperforming or are at par with boys in most subjects. However, though the average scores of girls are higher in most subjects, the differences are not very great. What becomes important in the Samoan case is the fact that boys are facing both under-participation and underperformance, especially at secondary level. The signs of underperformance start early at primary level, and this feature distinguishes Samoa from many other countries that face the problem of boys' underachievement.

TABLE 19: NATIONAL YEAR 12 MEAN SCORE RESULTS BY SUBJECT AND SEX, SAMOA

SUBJECT	SEX	2001	2002	2003	2004
ACCOUNTING	BOYS	50	52	50	44
	GIRLS	50	53	53	48
ECONOMICS	BOYS	52	53	52	46
	GIRLS	50	55	55	49
ENGLISH	BOYS	43	46	46	44
	GIRLS	49	51	51	50
FOOD & NUTRITION	BOYS	34	39	39	NA
	GIRLS	38	42	43	NA
GEOGRAPHY	BOYS	48	51	50	46
	GIRLS	49	51	50	48
HISTORY	BOYS	50	54	54	47
	GIRLS	53	55	55	49
MATHEMATICS	BOYS	47	51	48	46
	GIRLS	48	49	49	48
PHYSICS	BOYS	53	59	57	45
	GIRLS	56	57	57	50
SAMOAN	BOYS	42	44	42	45
	GIRLS	47	48	47	49
SCIENCE	BOYS	44	49	51	NA
	GIRLS	49	50	50	NA
DESIGN TECHNOLOGY	BOYS	35	40	39	NA
	GIRLS	41	36	44	NA
BIOLOGY	BOYS		52	49	47
	GIRLS		49	50	48
CHEMISTRY	BOYS		63	58	60
	GIRLS		58	57	51

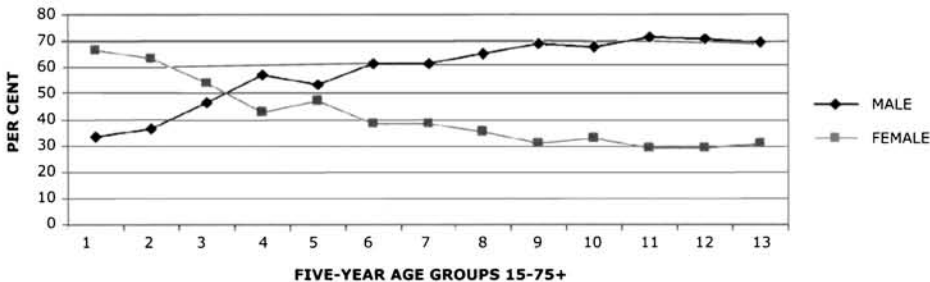
Source: Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture: Examiner.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The census is responded to by citizens at all age levels, and thus it gives a view of historical social trends. An analysis of data from the census shows that boys' underachievement is a recent phenomenon and has helped in reducing the gender difference in educational achievement. The 2001 census asked respondents to identify levels of educational achievement, and the responses show that the gender split of those completing university has been progressively changing over time. Over 70 per cent of people 75+ who had completed university were males. The relative proportions trended together and 50 years later the gender proportions equalised in the population that is now 25-30 years old (Figure 3). This equalisation has since led to a reversal of achievement trends at the tertiary level, with the current younger generation of women accessing university much more than their male counterparts.

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FIGURE 3: GENDER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE COMPLETED UNIVERSITY BY FIVE-YEAR AGE GROUPS 15-75+, SAMOA



Source: Government of Samoa, 2003c.

While there have been positive developments in post-school education and training, the numbers of enrolments are still insignificant against the number not enrolled. In 2001 the total population between the ages of 15-25 was 34,503 and the average number in each age cohort in that range was 3,137 with none less than 2,614. The majority of any age cohort are outside formal tertiary education. This group should not be seen as 'drop outs' as the vast majority will be engaged in economically and socially worthwhile activities. However, they are outside the formal track of educational provision and as a consequence do not have easy access to up-grading of skills. Establishing a meaningful national strategy for the post-school sector requires that the scope of the issue must be recognised. In fact, constant pressure on the formal post-school institutions by increased numbers of applicants has pushed entry standards up. The paradox that is facing the national system is that with a chronic skills shortage in all areas, access to technical and vocational education has to be rationed and entry standards to post-school higher education are being raised (Government of Samoa, 2005c).

In terms of employment, we see a very different picture, with more than twice as many males employed as females. Table 20 shows the disaggregation of employment by industry and gender. The figures show that the bulk of employment is within the 'agriculture, hunting and forestry' and 'manufacturing in traditional/ home setting' categories (41 per cent). The majority of males are involved in agriculture, hunting and forestry, while the greatest numbers of females are also concentrated in this sector as well as manufacturing in traditional/ home setting. Females outnumber males in home and service related activities such as manufacturing in traditional/ home setting; wholesale and retail trade; education; financing, insurance and business servicing; health and social work; international organisation; and also in manufacturing in formal setting where they may compromise the bulk of the process workers in enterprises such as Yazaki and Vailima.¹⁸

18 Yazaki International is a Japanese company that constructed a wire-harnessing plant in 1996 that has become the country's biggest private sector employer. Vailima Breweries produce and export beer.

TABLE 20: DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, 2001, SAMOA

	TOTAL	%	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
AGRICULTURE, HUNTING, FORESTRY	17,711	35	15,613	44	2,098	14
MANUFACTURING IN TRADITIONAL/ HOME SETTING	5,422	11	1,912	5	3,510	23
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	3,322	7	2,143	6	1,179	8
PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD WITH EMPLOYEES	2,884	6	2,022	6	862	6
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE	2,757	5	1,460	4	1,297	9
FISHING ACTIVITIES	2,575	5	2,240	6	335	2
EDUCATION	2,341	5	864	2	1,477	10
OTHER COMMUNITY, SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SERVICES	2,096	4	1,566	4	530	3
MANUFACTURING IN FORMAL SETTING	1,941	4	907	3	1,034	7
TRANSPORT, STORAGE AND COMMUNICATION	1,929	4	1,636	5	293	2
CONSTRUCTION	1,674	3	1,601	5	73	0
RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	1,522	3	770	2	752	5
FINANCING, INSURANCE AND BUSINESS SERVICING	1,082	2	526	1	556	4
ELECTRICITY, GAS AND WATER	906	2	808	2	98	1
HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK	843	2	341	1	502	3
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION	472	1	220	1	252	2
REAL ESTATE, RENTING AND BUSINESS SERVICES	268	1	175	0	93	1
NOT STATED	854	2	545	2	309	2
TOTAL	50,599	100	35,349	100	15,250	100

Source: Government of Samoa, 2003c.

The 2001 census indicated that about 50 per cent of the population aged 15 years and over were economically active (52,998 persons). Two thirds of the economically active population was male (36,772). About 25 per cent of the population worked in a paid job and another 25 per cent worked in agriculture. However, the census reports that while there are fewer females in work than males, females had a lower proportion of unpaid work than their male counterparts, indicating that females who did become economically active were more likely to choose and gain paid employment than males. These statistics allow us to surmise that, other than those who attend the already-mentioned alternative education centres that take in boys who have dropped out from the

secondary education system, boys leaving education will enter some form of economic activity, but this could often be within the informal or traditional agricultural sectors that do not always guarantee regular pay.

CULTURAL CONTEXT: MASCULINITY, GENDER IDENTITY AND SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Samoan culture has a complex construction of male gender identity and masculinity that is intrinsically connected to strong societal responsibility for the family and the collective. The culture is based on a *fa'amatai*, a system of village government by chiefs called *matai*. The *matai* governs an entire *aiga* or extended family. The *aiga* is the foundation of the wider society. Boys in particular are encouraged to respect the *matai*, and young men will see that the greatest honour

is to become *matai* but know this is only achieved by visible evidence of support to community welfare.

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The relationship of brothers (all male relatives) to sisters (all female relatives) is defined in terms of a protectorship, where the brother is the provider and protector of the sister. Once children are old enough to work, their relationship to their parents becomes that of caregiver and service provider in return for the years they had been taken care of. The relationship of extended families within a village is defined by the hierarchy of high chiefs and orators. Together, the village families operate as

kinsfolk bound by a common heritage as signalled by the village honorific.

Gender-specific roles are followed. Girls are expected to be competent in the women's tasks of weaving and the like. The young women enter the *aua'luma* or village women's committee, which focuses on the production of traditional mats and the welfare of the families. The young men enter the *aumaga* or men's group and focus on developing proficiency in fishing, agricultural tasks, food preparation and the *'ava* ceremony (held on special occasions). Leadership is held by the chiefs and orators in a mutually dependent relationship. In everything, people operate as kinsfolk in the activities that sustain their lives in the village.

The link to walkabout and other rites of passage is through a system of what can most simply be called community service. The so-called 'untitled men' (*taulelea*) are the strength of the village and its workforce: the farmers, the fisherman and, in former times, the warriors. They remain untitled until such time as they are chosen by the family to be a *matai*. Service is a significant factor in choosing a *matai* as expressed in the Samoan saying: "*O le ala I le pule o le tautua*" (the way to authority is through service).

There is a sophisticated hierarchy when it comes to the views of youth reaching the ears of the village council. They have a choice of three avenues: *aualuma* – the female descendents of the village, *aiga* – their family or *aumaga* – the group of untitled men. Views have to be filtered through these gate-keepers before they reach the council of chiefs. The village council still has remarkable power, but this is increasingly coming into conflict with movements away from traditional society as the country becomes modernised. The implications of this could result in alienation and social disenfranchisement for boys and adolescents. A worrying factor within Samoan society is the high incidence of suicide among males. Table 21 shows the suicide numbers since 2000 disaggregated by sex. Over these six years, three quarters of suicides were males. The age range for males was from 10 to 76 years old. It is possible, though difficult to prove, that there is a link between boys' underachievement in education, the suicide rates and the traditional system of administration. More research is needed into these aspects to understand the association and linkages.

TABLE 21: SUICIDE NUMBERS BY SEX, 2000-2005, SAMOA

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	TOTAL	%
MALE	11	11	7	8	16	5	58	75
FEMALE	3	4	2	4	3	1	17	22
NOT KNOWN	1	1					2	3
TOTALS	15	16	9	12	19	6	77	100

Source: *Fa'ataua le Ola*, 2005.

DON BOSCO TECHNICAL CENTRE

Background

Don Bosco Technical Centre is a single-sex institution that responds to the needs of marginalised boys who left regular formal secondary schools without completing the course. The Centre aims to facilitate holistic development of boys through focusing on technology education, career preparation and opportunities to develop social awareness. It opened with 32 students in 1989 and the number had increased to 250 in 2005. Students are mainly from the rural villages of the two largest islands, Upolu and Savaii.

The Centre provides a four-year programme of study in design and technology associated with woodwork, metalwork, plumbing, mechanical engineering and boat building. The contents include theory, practical applications and information about the range of available career possibilities. In addition, students are offered courses in mathematics, communication skills, *fa'asamoa*¹⁹ or cultural education, basic literacy and religious education. The Centre also seeks to develop in its students the virtues of honesty, integrity, responsibility, trust and loyalty and strives to foster a commitment towards religious and moral convictions.

The Centre operates a flexible arrangement whereby students may leave on finding employment. Students who remain at the Centre for the full four years have a very high rate of success in terms of finding work or continuing with their studies. The curriculum is aimed at preparing students for employment, self-employment or to go on to further studies at Samoa Polytechnic. This case study is a brief investigation into the philosophy and practices of the institution in relation to the educational development of boys.

Boys' experience of barriers to achievement in mainstream schools

Eleven groups of factors were identified by students as barriers to their achievement in mainstream schools. In order of the most frequently to the least frequently mentioned, these were:

- 1 teacher and teaching-related factors,
- 2 home factors,

19 *Fa'asamoa* refers to the Samoan way of life and encompasses beliefs, values and cultural practices.

- 3 poor self-image and behaviour,
- 4 girl-related factors,
- 5 school rules and punishment,
- 6 language and literacy,
- 7 drugs,
- 8 peer pressure,
- 9 school management,
- 10 attitudes and behaviour of others, and
- 11 resources.

Teachers' attitudes appeared to be a major issue in underachievement as students experienced disrespect in the form of corporal punishment, threatening language, humiliation, favouritism and lack of attention to weak students.

Pedagogy was described as narrow, uninspiring, not providing feedback or review and not providing differential learning for varying abilities. The most frequently identified home factor was poverty in terms of being cash-poor, resulting in an inability to pay school fees and meet other school costs. The presence of girls was viewed as distracting, and also leading to fear of being ridiculed in front of them. Interestingly, none of the students mentioned any alienation from school as a result of perceptions that school or academic achievement is a 'feminine' pursuit or pastime, a factor that has come up in studies on boys' achievement in countries such as Australia and Jamaica. It appears that poor performance also emanates from poor knowledge of English, which is the medium of instruction in secondary schools. A test of students entering the Centre showed that none of them had the proficiency required for learning other subjects through that language.

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Aspirations and achievements at the Centre

Students at Don Bosco Technical Centre were mostly aspiring to have the requisite skills for finding a livelihood option. A strong sense of wanting to pay back a debt to parents, church and society exists. Boys seem to bear on their shoulders the burden of being the breadwinner and protector. Students reported a sense of achievement at the Centre in terms of the enhancement of skills related to technology and its application and the development of appropriate

attitudes, values and behaviour, and other life skills. Many of them also reported improvement in language skills. They acknowledged developing a sense of purposefulness, a keenness to learn and a disciplined lifestyle. They also made special mention of communication skills in which many spoke of an increased confidence to interact in group, class and whole school situations with audiences of different ages. The boys also appreciated the emphasis on developing independence and self-confidence shown in letting them design and complete projects on their own. Students felt respected and cared for.

Students were clearly positive in their sense of belonging to the Centre. They enjoyed going to school and felt engaged in the activities. They experienced and appreciated the sense of purposefulness, and showed a keenness to learn and a disciplined lifestyle. Many of them felt that the Centre had contributed in bringing positive changes to their outlook and behaviour. There was a sense of pride in what they had been able to achieve. Therefore, an important part of their achievements at Don Bosco was regaining their sense of self, a desire to try harder, be productive and make a contribution to family and village, and to seek further knowledge and understanding in order to achieve all this. Learning life skills was highlighted by students as an important accomplishment, and they acknowledged achievements in religious knowledge and application.

One source of pride has come from the emphasis on knowledge, skills and values associated with racing the long boats or *fautasi*. These were the traditional means of transport between islands or around the coastal villages of the same island. They each have around 50 rowers and are now primarily used in competitions during national celebrations. Besides Don Bosco, no other school has rowed a *fautasi* during the national competitions. Rowing was also used as an opportunity to teach science and cultural principles involved in boat design, the art and skills of rowing, the discipline involved in maintaining fitness, and the principles of working as a team and making monetary contribution to the school through their prize money.

Effective approaches and processes at the Centre

Analysis of the processes at the Centre led to the identification of seven principles that helped in achieving high levels of acceptance and support from students and ensured their good performance. These principles were identified by the students themselves in the order that they are presented:

- 1 enabling school environment,
- 2 school leadership, attitudes and philosophy,
- 3 nature of the curriculum,
- 4 education for life,
- 5 teachers' attitudes and philosophy,
- 6 teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills, and
- 7 teacher-student relationship.

The school emphasises creating space for respectful and meaningful dialogue between teachers and students, principal and students, and students and students. An annual retreat organised as a residential one-week event for the entire school provides an excellent opportunity for team-building. Regular whole school meetings with the principal are another method for developing a shared vision and sense of ownership. The principal used these meetings to challenge, motivate and counsel the students, and they are perceived by students as having a great impact. The Centre's participation in outside-school events – including competing in the *fautasi* races, performing traditional dances and having sports teams in the local competitions during national celebrations – helps in developing a collective identity and cooperative attitude. Highlighting the achievement of students is followed as a strategy to build and nurture their self-esteem and self image. The school does not allow corporate punishment.

The combination of theory with practical and workplace experience is clearly considered an effective approach by both students and teachers. The incorporation of life skills, values and culture in planned curricular activities helps in giving education a lifelong focus. The development of interpersonal skills, understanding gender-related issues, diversity, decision-making skills, creative thinking and problem-solving skills, analytical skills for assessing self and others, information-gathering skills, and coping and stress-management skills prepare them to face the world for life. Teaching styles are such that they depict confidence in students' ability to do things on their own. Students appreciated teachers' special attention to those who were perceived to be weak. Teacher-student relationships appeared to be relaxed and based on trust and respect.

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Gender identity: notions of masculinity

It is interesting to note that the notion of masculinity promoted in the Centre matches that prevalent in traditional Samoan society. The boys most often see themselves in the role of protector of their parents, sisters, extended family, village and church. They see themselves as being responsible for providing for their food needs and shelter and meeting family obligations to the church and the village. The relationship to sisters is sacred and seen as *feagaiga* or covenant, the *i'omata* or 'pupil of the brothers' eye'. This means as males their duties are to protect their sisters, be of service through ensuring there is sufficient food and that it is cooked for them, and do all the household chores. Although following patriarchy where women have limited economic and political rights, in Samoan society boys and men are expected to cook and do other work in the household. Masculinity is also associated with leadership for which, as noted earlier, service is a prerequisite. Through service, males can learn to be leaders responsible for safeguarding family assets, distributing family resources and representing the family at village and church forums.

There is a strong belief among the boys of this masculine identity being their heritage. The school also seems to reinforce these notions through "making the boys aware of their role in families and society; to become good fathers, *matai* and providers of the family", as expressed by one teacher. Notions of masculinity are grounded in cultural beliefs and practices that are very much part of life in their villages. This has helped in giving the boys a strong identity. However, it can be questioned on the ground that it does not help in any way in reducing some of the pressures on boys or some of the restrictions that girls face.

CONCLUSIONS

The case study provides a number of signals for addressing the issue of boys' underachievement, though some of them remain inconclusive and others need careful interpretation. The positive experiences of students at Don Bosco Technical Centre clearly indicate the need for reforming the school pedagogy, management processes and teachers in terms of their attitude and approach. This indication is quite definitive and it is also clear how the contrasts in such experiences between mainstream secondary school and this Centre had helped

students gain confidence and feelings of self-worth. Another important issue relates to the issue of vocationalisation. Such positive experiences are often taken as an indicator of the need for the secondary level of education to be vocationalised, especially for boys. While there is no doubt that some of the vocational courses need to be incorporated as a choice available to students, this cannot be promoted as the most desirable option for boys, especially those coming from rural or lower socio-economic backgrounds. What can be said here with greater confidence is that some of the processes and approaches used for vocational courses at the Centre provide principles for making any classroom pedagogy more interesting and effective. This includes the focus on interactive activities, showing confidence in students by allowing them handle complete projects themselves, and so on.

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The case study does not provide definite indicators regarding single-sex school. Although the absence of girls appeared to have helped the boys, the presence of girls did not emerge as the most important reason for low performance in mainstream secondary schools. Another critical area is notions about maleness, masculinity and boys' ability to process themselves as males in Samoa, and the interactions between these philosophies, practices and some of the evident patterns for males such as suicide and underachievement. As noted earlier, the overwhelming majority of those who commit suicide are males, and with such deep-rooted beliefs in the role of the male in servitude to the family, it would be important to find out what happens to male's notions of dignity when they find themselves in positions of underachievement at school and then in the community if they are unable to get paid employment. In sum, this being the first study in Samoa focusing on boys' educational achievement, there are many unknown areas that should be the focus of future research.