

CAPACITY BUILDING and COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Pacific Comprehensive Center

Webinar Session

November 28, 2007

Joann Sebastian Morris

BACKGROUND

- The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act urges increased parental/stakeholder participation in educational planning, assessment and accountability.
- How do we expand community involvement in ways that match the diverse Pacific cultures, traditions, attitudes and behaviors?

CURRENT and FUTURE MODELS

- New models for parental involvement across the Pacific have been developed and are showing positive results, such as the RMI Cluster PTA model shared by Evelyn Joseph in her webinar.
- We lack models for engaging the general public in education.
- Traditional communication systems often limit communication among certain social classes and between genders.

- Contemporary communication systems may allow greater flexibility but also limit full expression by all parties, e.g. job titles may restrict all but a Secretary or Director from speaking.
- Education systems operate within tradition-rich, politically charged social systems. How do we navigate within such systems?

WEBINAR TASK

- Let's consider the military build-up in Guam as a concrete example of a new education and training opportunity, and discuss ways to engage Pacific communities to ensure a positive impact.

Education's Challenge: Preparing Students for Employment during the Military Build-up

- The deployment of 9000 soldiers and 27,000 dependents to Guam will create untold numbers of jobs in the construction, health, social service, restaurant, hotel, and other industries.
- The lure of jobs will bring many Pacific Islanders – skilled and unskilled – to Guam.

WHO'S TALKING ABOUT GUAM?

- Education systems alone cannot prepare skilled workers.
- The once-in-a-lifetime job opportunities in Guam need to be a common topic of discussion across all segments of society, but they aren't - - yet.
- How do we engage traditional leaders, K-12 and college educators, legislators, PTAs, business owners, tradesmen/women, church officials, career counselors, NGOs, etc. in this current, vital, social and education issue?

WHERE IS THE COMMUNITY'S VOICE?

- Are there other natural leaders in the community? They may not be the traditional or contemporary title holders, but everyone looks to them for advice.
- How can these natural leaders become engaged in a social/educational issue of the day?

PUBLIC WILL ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS

- How do we heighten public awareness of the need to plan now to graduate a skilled worker in 2 years or less?
- How do we address concerns about a brain drain?
- To ensure action is taken NOW to improve educational and training opportunities, community involvement, public will, and political will are essential.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- What forms of communication exist?

Newspapers

Radio

Television (Announcements “page”)

Posters, publicly posted

Church announcements

Mic. Sem-like reports/documents

RE-INVENT THE FORUM

- During election years, there are numerous, culturally accepted forums for candidates. Can these forums be modified and tailored to discuss current educational and other issues?

FORWARD THINKING

- The need to address a fast-approaching opportunity (jobs in Guam) requires planning for an undetermined future 2-4 years away.
- Traditional thinking does not always rely on long-range planning. What actions or strategies can be implemented to help community members become more comfortable with the practice of thinking and planning for 2 or more years into the future?

GOAL: PUBLIC CAPACITY BUILDING

- Any new initiative needs public sector involvement for it to take hold and be successful.
- Involving as many stakeholders as possible in the initiative inevitably leads to discussion, debate, culturally appropriate action and, importantly, capacity building.