

PART 4:

1984–1996

While the 1970s were marked by radical subsidy schemes and independence for Papua New Guinea (PNG), by the 1980s the subsidy scheme was under review. The period covered in this part of the book starts with the handing down of two reports that were intended to guide policy in relation to aid and international students. The intersection of these two reports at the point of international development scholarships is discussed in depth in the first chapter of this part.

The second chapter returns to the more radical theme of Part 3 of the book, with the new scholarship designed to take the place of the subsidy scheme. The Equity and Merit Scholarship (EMSS) was short lived, and within three years had been replaced by another scheme (in name at least). Nevertheless, the EMSS laid the foundation for the scholarships that were to follow and several significant design elements of the program have carried through to the present. The chapter, and part, ends in late 1996, with the introduction of (yet another) new scholarship and the election of the conservative government of John Howard.

Dr Ray Anere, Beatrice Mahuru and Samson Akunaii

The first chapter of this part does not focus on a specific scholarship or scheme, as many of the previous chapters have. Nevertheless, scholarships continued to be offered by the Australian Government during the period that the chapter covers. One of the students who studied during this period was Dr Ray Anere. Anere studied in Australia in the early 1980s – from

1982 to 1985 at The Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra. He went to Australia firstly to take a Bachelor of Letters, then a Master of Arts. He then returned to the University of PNG (UPNG), his employer.

He studied in Australia under an Australian Development Aid Bureau (ADAB) scholarship. In an interview,¹ Anere said he chose ANU because of the existing relationships between academics at ANU and UPNG – highlighting the ongoing connections between ANU and universities in the Pacific, including UPNG. In his reflections, Anere recognised the privilege of studying in Australia, and at ANU specifically. In his interview he described how he had maintained connections with these colleagues. In a post marking the death of Anere in 2015, his brother, Davidson Anere, wrote that as brothers they had both managed to gain their education despite few funds being available. Following his ADAB scholarship studies in Australia, Anere completed his PhD in the USA with the support of a Fulbright Scholarship.² In an interview conducted the year before his death, Anere was able to point to one of the key conundrums of scholarships. He noted that there was a certain number of awards promised to PNG by the Australian Government, but these come to individuals as once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. Scholarship programs such as the award Anere benefited from ‘make a person a very different person’ – the individual impact was often life-changing.³ His sophisticated understanding of the impact of the scholarships on himself and his nation was notable as it is not often so clearly articulated.

Anere’s experience, studying under a number of different scholarships in the process of undertaking several degrees, was not uncommon. James Kaiulo⁴ completed his PhD at Macquarie University in 1990 after finishing his undergraduate degree at UPNG (and travelling to Australia on a Rotary travelling scholarship), and then his Masters in Hawaii with another scholarship. Because of his advanced degree, Dr Kaiulo was appointed Pro Vice Chancellor of UPNG within a few years of returning to PNG. Dr Anere, Dr Kaiulo and another alumnus of the period, Dr Sergie Bang,

1 Ray Anere, interview by Musawe Sinebare, Port Moresby, 17 December 2014, in David Lowe, Jonathan Ritchie, and Jemma Purdey, ‘Scholarships and Connections: Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, 1960–2010’, oral history data set, Deakin University, 2015.

2 Davidson Anere, ‘The Spirit of Brotherhood: A Tribute’, *My Land My Country* (blog), mylandmycountry.wordpress.com/2016/10/08/the-spirit-of-brotherhood-a-tribute-by-davidson-anere/, accessed 22 July 2020 (site discontinued).

3 Ray Anere, interview, 17 December 2014, in Lowe, Purdey and Ritchie, ‘Scholarships and Connections’.

4 James Kaiulo, interview by Jonathan Ritchie, Port Moresby, 12 February 2015, in Lowe, Ritchie and Purdey, ‘Scholarships and Connections’.

all discussed in interviews rapid promotion on return, and how they were all one of the first Papua New Guineans to gain a PhD in their respective fields. While these achievements are laudable, it is also notable that the first PhDs gained by Papua New Guineans in politics, agriculture and horticulture were only achieved in the mid to late 1980s, more than a decade after independence from Australia – highlighting the failure of successive Australian governments to invest in education in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea during their colonial administration.

The latter part of the decade also saw the introduction of a new secondary school scholarship program for Papua New Guinean senior secondary school students. This scheme, which is discussed in the second chapter of this part, was called the Secondary School Students' Project (SSSP).

An interview with a student who came to Australia as part of the SSSP program, Beatrice Mahuru, gives a great insight into the design flaws of the SSSP.⁵ Ms Mahuru completed her senior high school years in Australia, sponsored under the SSSP. On returning to PNG following the completion of her scholarship, Ms Mahuru gained entry into her third choice of university degree, which in itself was a perverse outcome of the SSSP program – as students returning to PNG after study abroad were third in the line of priority for university placements (after local students and international students who had studied in PNG). Ms Mahuru failed to complete her degree after she had a baby in her final year; her new husband was an American lecturer at the university. So, while Ms Mahuru was able to successfully complete her secondary schooling in Australia, her return to PNG was marred not only by social judgement, but also by a disconnect between a donor's 'aid' and recipient government policies.

Another alumnus who studied in Australia during the late 1980s, Samson Akunaii,⁶ provides another interesting case study in the difficulties in measuring and understanding the impact of a scholarship program, and clearly demonstrates the issue when a scholarship program has no more specifically defined outcome than 'development'. He studied for an MBA at James Cook University between 1987 and 1989. Mr Akunaii saw himself as a positive story from the scholarships, and discussed the skills he had taken home to PNG following his scholarship. But he saw flaws in the scholarship

5 Beatrice Mahuru, interview, 16 December 2014, in Lowe, Purdey and Richie, 'Scholarships and Connections'.

6 Samson Akunaii, interview, 9 July 2014, in Lowe, Purdey and Richie, 'Scholarships and Connections'.

program. In an interview, he reserved criticism not for the structure of the scholarship program, but also for his fellow awardees and the choices they made. He indicated a desire to hear more about how alumni are contributing to the development of PNG, but contended that little development has taken place. Mr Akunaii's call for the impact of scholarships to be visible highlights one of the key difficulties in demonstrating the value of scholarships. The building of a dam, or a school, is an obvious, tangible piece of infrastructure as a result of aid funding. The sending away of young people for education is only obvious in their absence. On their return, the outcomes of their study are less clear, and the expense and absence is less easily defended.

In his assessment of the failings of the scholarship program, Mr Akunaii highlighted the many and varied issues that come into play when one is investigating the longer-term impact of scholarship programs. Mr Akunaii saw the problem as the students who receive the scholarships, and their failure to make an impact on development on return, or at the very least their failure to articulate the impact they have made. These perceptions are common within scholarship evaluation.⁷ Impact must be articulated within the evaluation framework as proscribed. This can lead to a scholarship program, or a scholarship recipient being deemed a 'failure', when in fact the outcomes are merely outside of what is expected. Beatrice Mahuru is an excellent case of the latter, as she has gone on to have a successful corporate career in PNG and the USA.

7 Joan Dassin and David Navarrete, 'International Scholarships and Social Change: Elements for a New Approach', in *International Scholarships in Higher Education: Pathways to Social Change*, ed. Joan Dassin, Robin Marsh, and Matt Mawer, 305–27 (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62734-2.

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