

PACIFIC news

American Samoa

On January 5, Cyclone Heta hit American Samoa, causing extensive property damage and many injuries. The cyclone, which at its height reached category five strength, also struck Samoa, Tonga, and the Cook Islands, before inflicting severe damage on Niue.

CNMI and FSM

Presidents Kenneth Wright of Northern Marianas College (NMC) and Dr. Michael Tatum of the College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) have resigned. Tony Deleon Guerrero has taken over as acting president of NMC and Spensin James is now the acting president of COM-FSM.

RMI

A new National Vocational Training Institute will begin offering classes next August. The institute is part of the Skills Training and Vocational Education project, which is funded by a loan from the Asian Development Bank. The institute will provide general and vocational training from grade 9 through the post-secondary level to students who do not pass the public high school entrance test.

Chuuk

A new children's book in Chuukese retells the traditional Uwaw legend and relates it to the contemporary issue of environmental conservation. Written and illustrated by Xavier High School students Monessa Kim and Dalina Alafanso Nero, the book retells the legend explaining how the uwaw (a species of bird that is endemic to Chuuk and is endangered due to habitat loss) got its black face and beak, and encourages children to take care of forests and mangroves.



Photo: Clank Graham

Samoa

Ministers of education of 14 Pacific nations met in Apia on January 28-29 at a conference organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The conference focused on assessing implementation of UNESCO's Education for All program and on discussing ways to overcome the challenges in education that are specific to the region.

Region

PREL is piloting a new distance learning course designed to help teachers address the unique beginning reading needs of lower elementary students in the Pacific region. The course, Comprehensive Literacy Framework for the Pacific Region, K-3, is based on best practices in the teaching of early reading literacy in English. Participants are asked to reflect on these ideas and are encouraged to adapt the content in order to establish the most appropriate early literacy practices for their cultural and linguistic settings.

PREL

The NEARStar program's website (www.nearstar.org) has received a BESSIE award for the best ESL website. The BESSIE awards are given by ComputED Learning Center in San Diego to recognize innovative and high-quality websites and programs from around the world.