

ADVERTISEMENT

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES IN INDEPENDENT ABORIGINAL
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Since its inception in 1976 a school at Strelley Station in the Port Hedland region of Western Australia's Pilbara has provided a model and inspiration for bi-lingual education and community involvement that has been followed by a number of other station communities in the Pilbara and the Kimberley.

WHY A COMMUNITY SCHOOL?

"One time we sent some kids to the government school and they never came back. Those kids are broken people now."* So says Billy Thomas, a community leader. The Strelley Mob was once refused a government school and later refused to consider sending children to school in Port Hedland. It was not until the seventies when 'alternative schools' were starting up in the southern capitals that the necessary climate for the establishment of an Aboriginal community school existed. The community was not willing to accept a school where personnel were not accountable to them. They wanted a school, but on their own terms.

In order to comply with the legal requirements involved in establishing and attracting funds to an independent school, the Nomads group of Aborigines established the Nomads Charitable and Educational Foundation (N.C.E.F.) in the early 1970s. Registered under the W.A. Charities Act, the Foundation's constitution ensures that the interests and ideals of a traditionally oriented Aboriginal community determined to pursue a policy of genuine self determination and self management, are fully supported. The Foundation also provides a facility for the recruiting of teachers and the drawing up of contracts designed to protect the interests of teachers and community.

Authority over the daily running of the schools resides in school committees. These committees, in conjunction with

* 'Broken people' is the local term for fringe-dweller.

the N.C.E.F., control the hiring of teachers and the setting of employment conditions; the division of adults and children into different school classes; the positioning of all school classes and activities; the selection of adults to work as teachers with the white personnel; and the approval or rejection of proposed teaching programmes, curricula and teaching materials. Teachers are directly accountable to these structures and through them the communities have continually emphasised four areas they want the schools to respect and support:

1. The social customs of the people.
2. The local economy.
3. The religion of the people.
4. The major local languages.

SALARY

The salary paid to teachers employed by the N.C.E.F. is currently based on the N.T. (Commonwealth Teaching Service) scale. The majority of vacancies are the equivalent of Band 1, with commencing salary depending on previous years of experience, qualifications etc.

CONDITIONS

The N.C.E.F. is responsible for providing adequate furnished accommodation, standard sick leave benefits and a superannuation scheme (non-compulsory).

A fare to and from Perth is paid each year for teachers and dependants. Removal expenses are negotiated with the N.C.E.F. and depend largely on the current location of applicants, marital status and availability of funds.

CONTRACT

Following an initial six week trial period a decision is made by the community, the N.C.E.F. and the applicant on whether or not a contract is to be offered. In the event of the applicant and the community failing to come to agreement the applicant's fare to his point of embarkation is paid by the N.C.E.F. This arrangement is followed as it allows both the applicant and the community a reasonable opportunity to assess the applicant's response to living and working in a challenging and demanding cross-cultural situation requiring as it does sensitivity, maturity and commitment to the ideals of the communities.

The contract to be entered into by the successful applicant requires him or her to respect the traditions and customs of the community and to abide by the no alcohol restriction applied by the group. The contract also spells out the obligations of the N.C.E.F.

INTERESTED IN A POSITION?

Persons interested in possible teaching positions for 1981 or for future years are invited to write for further information and an application form to :

The Secretary,
N.C.E.F.,
462 Belmont Avenue,
KEWDALE W.A. 6105

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NOTICE

Readers will be interested to note that Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education will commence a Pilot Program in 1981 for Aboriginal educators in Gippsland schools engaged in working with teachers, children and the Aboriginal community of their respective schools.

The program will focus on an awareness of Aboriginal historical and cultural development and education studies to enhance communication skills and the ability to work within the schools and local community. It will be largely school and community based with some intensive workshops at student centres, including the Gippsland Institute.

Applications have been invited from suitably experienced persons to develop and co-ordinate a pilot program involving working with teacher aides, school staff and community groups. The person appointed as co-ordinator of the programs will work in close consultation with the Course Advisory Committee, Principals of Schools, and other community groups.

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TOWNSVILLE COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

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**PRE-SCHOOL AND INFANTS' SCHOOL STUDENT TEACHERS
SOUGHT UNDER SPECIAL SCHEME**

The Townsville College of Advanced Education will be conducting interviews soon with Aboriginal and Islander people who wish to train as specialists in Early Childhood Education.

The Director, Mr Ross Mackee, said the course will cater for men and women wishing to teach in pre-schools or in Grades 1 and 2 of the primary school, in communities with a significant Aboriginal or Islander population.

The Early Childhood Education courses will be offered under the Aboriginal and Islander Teacher Education program - AITEP.

AITEP currently provides the opportunity for Aborigines and Islanders, who may not have completed their secondary education, to study over seven, instead of the usual six semesters. This program has proved so successful that the Townsville College is now moving into Early Childhood Education, subject to approval, to provide Aboriginal and Islander teachers who will probably prefer to work in remote communities. They will be fully qualified, however, to teach wherever they choose.

The Townsville C.A.E. is to the forefront in Australia in undertaking the teacher education of Aboriginal and Islander people. Black students from all over Queensland are among the 60 enrolled in the Diploma of Teaching program at present. The first three graduates of the special-entry scheme are now working in Townsville and Brisbane schools and five more are expected to graduate in December.

Dr Noel Loos, Senior Lecturer in Aboriginal Education, said the introduction of the Early Childhood Education program is not only an extension of teacher education within the College, but is also a Queensland first.

He said - We know that throughout the state there are Aboriginal and Islander men and women capable of successfully completing the Diploma of Teaching program, specialising in the educational, emotional and social needs of children aged three to seven.

Special arrangements can be made to bring them to Townsville next month for interview and though many potential students may have family responsibilities, it is possible to overcome most difficulties.

The Commonwealth Department of Education will pay expenses and advise applicants about further assistance that is available if they decide to enrol.

Information can be obtained by writing to :

The Registrar
Townsville College of Advanced Education,
P.O.Box 117,
Aitkenvale,
Queensland 4814

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What non-English language has the most Aboriginal speakers?

Surveys indicate that KRIOL (commonly called 'pidgin') is spoken by at least 15,000 Aborigines in the Northern Territory, the Kimberleys and north west Queensland. In some communities, it is the mother tongue of at least three generations.

Shouldn't some European workers in Aboriginal communities be learning Kriol?

We think so, and we are publishing a Kriol language learning course to help them. It is Volume 5 of the SIL-AAB Work Paper Series B. (Volumes 3 and 4 of the same series are a Kriol dictionary and Kriol grammar.)

INTRODUCTION TO CONVERSATIONAL KRIOL

by John R. and Joy L. Sandefur

Manual + six 60-minute cassettes:

- . 30 lessons, each containing conversation, vocabulary, drills, grammar notes, etc.
- . 5 lessons of stories in Kriol by different speakers
- . Kriol speakers on the 6 cassettes, for conversational practice and drills
- . Tips on language learning.

Pre-publication price is \$18.00. After 1 January 1981, the price is \$24.00. (Both prices include postage.) Discounts are available on bulk orders.*

For further information, or to place orders:

Bookseller
Summer Institute of Linguistics
Australian Aborigines Branch
P.O. Berrimah, Darwin, NT 5788

**Schools may purchase one full set plus manuals only at \$5.00 per additional manual.*