INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

IN

A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

IN SAMOA

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for Jen

'i carry your heart with me (i carry it in my heart)'

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Summary

The data for this research thesis derives from a development project in Samoa. Through the study of key project events and their associated discourses the study identifies and interprets cultural and professional resources that the project team draws on as they negotiate their way through the project; in particular the 'resources' (including communication resources) that participants bring to project interactions. The thesis explores how participants used these resources and what consequences resulted (for them and for others) from such use.

This study takes a critical and ideological stance, underpinned by a belief in the value and possibility of social action. While not primarily a call to action, the thesis presents its interpretations in the context of larger ethical and political challenges, with a view to informing change, specifically what deliberate action might be taken to improve processes and practices in future projects. The project is explored as a 'soft' system of social interactions and processes; and as a 'Third Space' (Bhabha 1990, 1994) where traditional boundaries of socio-cultural organisation, or of professions, are destabilised and where newly-constructed practices, orders of discourse, identities and representations are required.

The study is evaluation and policy oriented. It explicitly addresses the implications of knowledge gained from the research for future project design and implementation. In making recommendations for project change, the study argues for the inclusion of local research as a legitimate project task, to inform evaluative processes and create a framework for ongoing modification to project design and implementation. The recommendations for change made in this study are concerned with determining principles and codes of practice for:

- *identifying and developing intercultural competence in project situations*
- *project training (for intercultural project work, including ongoing participant research)*
- *improving project systems*
- *using relevant approaches/techniques in organisational change management.*

Statement

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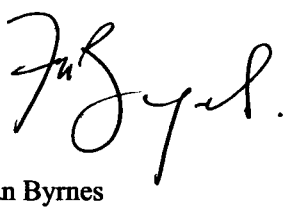

Fran Byrnes February 25, 2005

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