



Distance is the biggest challenge to education in French Polynesia

The name of French Polynesia often rhymes with holidays with white sand beaches, crystal-clear waters and unspoiled nature. Yet, behind those beautiful postcards and the legendary Tahitian hospitality lies a much different reality.



- Remoteness is a huge obstacle to education. French Polynesia is a group of 120 islands spread out on a surface as big as Europe (5.5 millions km²). Yet, only two islands have high schools and many do not have middle schools.
- One third of students drop out of high school each year, including more than half under the age of 16
- Only 14% of the population of these islands graduate from high school
- The rate of youth illiteracy is 38% to 42% (versus 10% in France)
- 55% of population live below the poverty line



Photo on the left shows a common weekly scene of teenagers fighting in the city center on Wednesday afternoons (photo from Tahiti Info newspaper, 2017)

Transitions Without Borders

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Our educators are all highly qualified volunteers with extensive experience in international education

Transitions Without Borders is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) organization incorporated in the state of California; all donations are tax-deductible. Depending on fundraising, our first cohort will be around 12 students.

The boarding cost of one student for an entire school year, all included, is US\$9'000. **We are seeking individual student sponsoring in any amount.** In appreciation for the generosity of our sponsors, TWB and the students' families, may host our donors during their visit in French Polynesia and provide an authentic, full immersion Polynesian stay.

Our boarding house aims to narrow the educational gap for motivated students of remote archipelagos of Polynesia, and to nurture a new kind of leaders for our islands. It is in the town of Punaauia, 12km west of Papeete, the capital. The site is seaside, facing the island of Moorea.

More info on www.TransitionsWithoutBorders.org and our local Tahitian website www.OtiaOre.org

View from the balcony of our boarding house



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A not-for-profit 501(c) (3) organization

A school of life and a leadership program for high school boys from remote archipelagos in grades 10-11-12



Behind the project in Tahiti

Max and Melissa Gygax have founded Transitions Without Borders in October 2015 after working at international schools in Switzerland and Italy. Max has an extensive experience in business management, school administration and teaching at the secondary and post-secondary levels in the United States and in Europe. He currently teaches Finance at the university in Tahiti. Born and raised in French Polynesia, Melissa has lived abroad in France, the United States, Switzerland and Italy for 31 years before returning to Tahiti, her native island in 2015. Like Max, she has worked at



international schools as a University and Guidance Counselor before dedicating her time as a volunteer in this project.

Rich and Theresa Koesterer will be joining Transitions Without Borders as volunteers for the 2018-2019 school year. Richard has many years of experience as a University Professor and Chemistry Teacher. Theresa has been a classroom teacher and school administrator for secondary schools throughout her career in the United States, West Indies, Europe and Africa. Both Rich and Theresa are Fulbright Scholars to Kenya, Cameroun and Poland.



"Education is man's best hope for a better world." Mary Crist Fleming

Our boarding house: the first of its kind in French Polynesia

At the present time, there is a huge lack of space at the existing boarding structures. Most of latter are open only from Monday through Friday so many students are left without supervision on weekends. Personal or academic support programs are non-existent or insufficient.

Our charitable purpose is to give a chance to some of these motivated but underserved remote island students, by hosting them in a favorable, supportive and family-like English-speaking environment. Our boarders attend one of the local high schools. Our goal is to prepare them for academic success, and more importantly, to nurture their growth to become respectful, responsible, compassionate, internationally-minded and engaged citizens of French Polynesia and of the world.



During their stay, besides room, board and caring supervision, we assist students with their homework. We support their personal development with regular after-school and weekend activities tailored to their interests, needs and objectives. As part of the leadership program, our students will also engage in a two-year entrepreneurial project in which they will be able to practice valuable skills in an area of their choice, including the sciences, the environment, arts & culture, business, sports, diplomacy, etc.

We host boys who have a passion for the well-being and development of their Polynesian homeland and aspire to become catalysts of positive change for a better Polynesia.

